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REVIVAL SERMONS

IN OUTLINE

WITH THOUGHTS, THEMES AND PLANS

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BY EMINENT PASTORS AND EVANGELISTS

EDITED BY

REV. C. PERREN, PH. D.

Author of "Seed Corn for the Sower," etc.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume is designed to assist all those whose souls are burdened for their fellow-men, and whose daily prayer is, "O Lord, revive thy work." It consists of two parts. Part I contains suggestions concerning the conduct of revival meetings, dealing with such topics as, "The Divine and Human Agency in Revivals;" "The Pastor's Value in Revivals;" "The Place of the Evangelist in Revivals;" "How to Prepare for a Revival;" "How to Conduct the Sabbath Evening Service," etc., etc. These have been written by men of experience in religious work, and must be exceedingly helpful to all who desire to know more perfectly the way to win souls.

Part II contains a large number of sermon outlines adapted to revival services. These are from many of the most eminent pastors and evangelists, and have been used in their own ministrations. Many of them have been furnished by request, and are printed for the first time; others are from stenographic reports, which, while in some cases possibly not appearing as finished in form as if penned by the author, yet present more literally the addresses as delivered; and as such will be of larger value to the reader; and still others have been condensed from sermons that have been published in full.

As to the value and proper use of such outlines — they are not to be servilely copied or memorized. "They are to be regarded as models and incentives; a record of texts

and subjects designed to guide the mind in its choice, and to create thought and invention." The architect studies plans of buildings prepared by others; the orator reads the speeches and addresses of those who have moved multitudes; artistic genius has ever before it the models of great masters, and why should not the soul-winner imitate their example?

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." This is the reward, and it is sure. "For whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"—not something else, but *that very thing*, intensified and multiplied. The Lord has said, "My word shall not return unto me void," and again, "Lo, I am with you alway." Let us, then, as ministers of the word, seek to save men and to write our names high, not upon the perishable monuments of earth, but upon the hearts of redeemed and disenthralled humanity.

The editor extends his thanks to all who have so kindly contributed their thoughts for this book, and trusts that those whose words he has used without their formal consent, will feel that it in so doing he has simply sought to extend their power and usefulness. May God graciously use the whole to the glory of his great and adorable name, and to the salvation of precious, blood-bought souls. Amen!

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PART ONE—REGARDING REVIVALS

SOME MODERN REVIVALS.

REV. JOHN R. DAVIES.

THE first half of the seventeenth century brought to the people of Great Britain a tremendous struggle for religious liberty. Elizabeth was dead, and also many of the great statesmen whom she had called to her councils. In their stead the Stuarts had come with a deep set purpose to rule or ruin. To compass this end, law was set aside, morality was ignored, covenants were broken, and religion compelled to weep as she saw multitudes of the godliest people of the realm forced to conform at home or seek safety by fleeing abroad. But in the midst of tyranny in the State, and persecution in the Church, God did not forget his suffering servants. In Scotland, following a period of fasting and humiliation, there came a series of revivals, the most marked of which were at Irving, Stewarton, and Schotts, where, upon a Monday after a communion Sabbath, was preached the celebrated sermon of John Livingston; when, in the five hundred said to have been converted thereby, Pentecost was almost repeated.

About the same time the North of Ireland was visited by a remarkable work of grace. There Blair, Dickson, Fleming, Glendening and others labored; and with such success, that people came forty miles to hear them; and in such multitudes that no room was large enough to accommodate them, and no day long enough to satisfy their

hunger for the gospel. Nor must we dismiss this portion of our subject without reminding the reader that to this period belong such men as Baxter, Bunyan, Flavel, Howe, Leighton, Tillotson, Owen, and Usher,—a glorious company of prophets,—a noble succession of faithful witnesses, whose saintly lives and consecrated labors, linked to the revival work of the seventeenth century, must have been as oil upon the wounds of a persecuted church, and as a sweet-smelling savor to those who had crossed the seas in order to find in the New World the freedom of conscience denied them at home.

But a century passes away, and the evangelical fervor, which made the names of Ulster, Schotts, Irvine, and Kidderminster so memorable, had fallen to a very low ebb. Upon the continent the Encyclopædists, revolutionary in politics and atheistical in religion, were all powerful. In Great Britain the church, called upon to contend against immorality and infidelity without, and against formalism and heresy within, seemed about to be overwhelmed by the gates of hell. At home matters were no better. Offenders cared not for ecclesiastical censure. None were denied the privileges of the Lord's Supper, and the last difference between the world and the church appeared to be swept away, when men of profligate lives were ordained to the gospel ministry. But at such a period, when the decay of vital godliness was so wide-spread and alarming, help came from unexpected sources. From his home, at Northampton, Jonathan Edwards arose, and out of the Log College issued the Tennants; and under the ministry of these spiritual giants, and others like-minded, there began to be a movement among the dry bones, which, through the indifference of a mere formalism, had been allowed to accumulate in all the Colonial churches. Nor were these

men alone. Across the Atlantic the Wesleys and Whitefield were beginning their remarkable labors, and shortly God's people upon both sides of the sea were enjoying an out-pouring of divine grace that was mighty in the immense multitudes brought to the cross, and marvelous in its far-reaching results, furnishing the seed for great philanthropic enterprises, and also laying the foundations of that modern missionary movement which, like a divine gulf stream, has saved the church from that frigid inactivity which is the sure symptom of spiritual death.

But again the years pass away, and the second half of this century is begun. Over all the land dark clouds are gathering which must grow in size and blackness, as North and South meet in awful conflict upon the battle-field. To increase the perplexity of the hour, a greed for gold, manifesting itself in daring speculation, in the wildest projects, brings to pass one of the most wide-spread and disastrous of financial panics which, for thousands, in a few moments, sweeps away fortunes that had been years in building. And as the church was unable either to read the signs of the times, or to gird up her loins to meet the grave problems that soon would be demanding her attention, there prevailed in her work and worship a coldness, an indifference, which was a daily source of sorrow to a faithful few. At last, expression to this spirit was given in a call for a daily prayer meeting, to be held in one of the busiest portions of New York City. The work, begun at first with fear and trembling, increased so that larger quarters had to be obtained, and quickly, as if by magic, this experience was repeated in nearly every town and city in the United States. Nor was this gracious work confined to our own country. In Scotland and Ireland, in England and Wales the spirit of revival was manifested with mighty power both

in the quickening of God's people, and in the conversion of great multitudes who were out of Christ ; so that at home and in the mother land, churches were literally born in a day. This Pentecostal season was of vast importance. It came upon the eve of the greatest of civil wars, and to thousands gave strength for the march, courage amid the battle, and peace in the dying hour. Furthermore, God's providence was then opening the doors and removing the barriers which for centuries had so hindered the progress of missions, and this baptism of the Holy Ghost, coming at this fullness of time, enabled the church to consecrate the vast wealth which then was beginning to flood her coffers, and also to avail herself of those magnificent opportunities for preaching Christ to a pagan world for which previous centuries had prayed, but had never seen.

These grand triumphs of the cross that we have briefly outlined, as far as any human agency was concerned, were achieved neither by the advocates of a new theology, nor by the messengers of a new gospel. In all these movements great emphasis was laid upon the sinfulness of sin, the necessity of Christ's atonement, and the lost condition of those who reject the inspired message of God's word. These were the truths that, through the Holy Spirit, were mighty in pulling down the strongholds of Satan, and honored in bringing to multitudes of troubled hearts the peace for which they were seeking. If we, in these latter times, would have a little Pentecostal season, we must be careful to use the same method, and be earnest in preaching the same great truths, and when this is done, then in God's own time and way, there will come a most gracious answer to the prayer of the prophet — "Lord, revive thy work."

DIVINE AND HUMAN AGENCY IN REVIVALS.

REV. JOHN GORDON, D. D.

MANY years ago there were persons who believed a revival was a miracle, hence human agency was as powerless to produce one as to produce tempest or sunshine. Few Christians of the present day will accept this theory ; for the history of revivals demonstrates that spiritual results as a rule are according to the right use of appropriate means. God has been pleased to appoint, direct, and bless human instrumentality in his service. In the proclamation of the gospel he has always employed human beings. Angels were never employed, so far as we know, as preachers of the gospel to a dying world, but were often sent to prepare the way for the ministry of men. An angel appeared to Cornelius and assured him that his prayers and alms were accepted of God, but this angel gave him no instruction in heavenly things, but said, "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon whose surname is Peter ; he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." The angel of the Lord commanded Philip to go toward the south. Obeying the command, he soon discovered his work, viz., to preach Jesus to the Ethiopian and unfold to him the treasures of Scripture and direct him in the way of obedience.

Jesus himself spake conviction to Saul of Tarsus, but for his instruction and consolation the Lord commanded

Ananias to minister unto him. It was not the miracle of tongues which converted thousands at Pentecost, but it was the preaching of Peter which led them to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Previous to this preaching, the Holy Ghost had endowed the disciples with power, so that in preparation for service, and in performance of it, there was in this, as in the other cases cited, a union of divine and human agency.

Who can question the importance of human instrumentality in the salvation of men, when the word of God so plainly declares, "He that winneth souls is wise"? "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever." "Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins."

While human agency is thus very plainly declared, we should ever remember that all man's work, however zealous and untiring; all his words, however eloquent; all combined forces of the professed people of God, apart from divine sanction and aid, shall be powerless in bringing one soul to Christ or in re-invigorating the church. Such results are "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts." To attain success we must be "laborers together with God," laborers, not idlers, laborers together with God, not equal with, but under and belonging to him, in subordination to God as instruments in his hand.

Examining the history of great revivals, we clearly see "the divine and human," as a combined and essential agency. That was a wonderful reformation in Israel during the reign of good King Josiah when idolatry was uprooted and the shrines of Baal were laid in ashes. How was this accomplished? Commissioned by Josiah, Shaphan the scribe, went to Hilkiah the high priest, to count

the silver which had been brought into the house of the Lord, and to pay carpenters, builders, and masons, and to buy timbers and hewn stones to repair the house. The silver which Hilkiah delivered to Shaphan was valuable in repairing the material structure, but "the book of the law which Hilkiah found in the house of the Lord," was more valuable than silver or gold, for it reached and reformed the hearts and lives of monarch, priest, and people, and led them to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes with all their heart and with all their soul.

Similar results followed the faithful proclamation of God's word by Paul in the idolatrous city of Ephesus. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed that many who had used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men, and they counted the price of them and found it 50,000 pieces of silver." So did that word prevail in the heart of Luther when, as a sin-burdened and enslaved monk, he found relief by reading an old Latin Bible in the library of Erfurth. Well do we say Martin Luther unchained the Bible, but the Bible first unchained him. When he found peace through its precious truth of justification by faith, what cared he for papal authority or ecclesiastical formalism? The sound of his hammer as he nailed his theses on the cathedral door at Wittenberg, figuratively speaking, aroused Germany from its slumbers; and the flames of his bonfire in which the pope's bull and certain Catholic books were burned, dispelled the darkness of the 16th century, and illuminated nations long groping in the blackness of superstition and sin.

The Reformation was a great revival, and was brought to pass by a union of divine and human agency. God's

word faithfully preached by man, and accompanied by the Holy Spirit, alike kindled the flames of Israel, Ephesus, and Wittenberg. The preaching of Christ, and him crucified, is the message of God to a guilty world; and wherever this message is received, it proves the power of God unto salvation. If we would experience revival, we must preach what God has commanded; and no truth of his revealed will is to be withheld, however severe its denunciation of sin or however distasteful it may be to the carnal nature.

Great was the success of Finney in revivals, and of his preaching it is said, "He preached God's word clear through and without flinching, never muffling the sword of the Spirit, he made it cut to the very marrow." These words may with equal force be applied to Jacob Knapp and Elder Swan, whose labors were blessed to thousands. Thus, in God giving the word, and in man preaching it, there is a union of divine and human agency, and without the knowledge of God's word, there can be no revival. Let us not only be sure that it is the gospel which we preach to men, but let us by every possible effort try to imitate Paul and Barnabas, who "so" preached that many believed. Acts 14:1.

Divine and human agency in revivals is markedly seen in the efficacy of personal and united prayer. The history of revivals amply proves prayer to be the right arm of every great awakening. To quote Scripture in proof of the necessity and potency of prayer in such work, would be to transcribe a great portion of the sacred word.

As bearing directly, however, on revivals, look at God's promise to his ancient people as recorded in the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel. They were to be cleansed from filthiness and idols, and were to receive a new heart and new spirit, and were to receive temporal blessings in their fields, flocks, and herds. How? God was abundantly able and

willing to give, but he declared, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them."

Before the gracious work at Pentecost was experienced, the disciples, and other believers — men and women — had been in constant prayer for many days. The great Wesleyan revival had its origin in a praying circle. Great was the awakening at Schott's, in Scotland, when under the preaching of one open-air sermon, on Monday, June 21, 1638, about 500 professed conversion. Where lay the source of power? The previous night was spent in prayer by most of the Christians in that place. A hundred years later, at Enfield, Mass., similar power was experienced under the sermon of President Edwards, on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." During the delivery of that sermon strong men seized the pillars of the church, as if to prevent their feet sliding into hell. Where lay the power of that memorable sermon? Many of the godly people of Enfield, distressed on account of the unsaved around them, spent the entire preceding night in prayer. The great revivals in 1857 and 1858 were the outcome of prevailing prayer. The acknowledged birth-place of the Irish revival was in a little country school-house at Tannybrake, county of Antrim, where four young men met for prayer nightly, for months, until the blessing came, and extended far and wide. During 1859 about 10,000 members were added to the churches in Ireland, and the invariable testimony is, that wherever a revival was experienced, it had been preceded by earnest, importunate prayer. Similar testimony is given concerning the revivals in Scotland and in Wales. Speaking from vast experience in revivals, Finney and Knapp have left their testimony to the place and power of prayer. Finney says: "Prayer is an essential line in the chain of causes that lead to a revival, as much as truth is."

Knapp says : "Our first work is prayer. Earnest, importunate, believing prayer must be made. The history of the first protracted meeting after Christ's ascension was doubtless designed as a pattern for all succeeding ages. There was not a sermon preached until after the Spirit had descended ; but then, under the preaching of a single sermon, three thousand were convinced of sin and led to cry for mercy." An aged and experienced minister says : "A revival without accompanying prayer is an impossibility, and without antecedent special prayer has probably never occurred."

The ministry of the late Dr. Robert Boyd was signally blessed with revivals, or rather, we might say with continuous ingathering of souls. At one time during his pastorate in Chicago he said at the close of a morning service, "Brethren, so far as I can learn, there has not been a conversion in this church for the past four weeks. I would like all who are concerned for the salvation of souls to meet me this afternoon (naming the hour) for special prayer." A large number gathered for this purpose, and that very evening a well-known infidel bookseller was converted. How many prayer meetings would be held all over the land if a similar statement should be made from our pulpits ? Are there not scores of churches where conversions have been unknown, not only for four weeks, but for as many months ?—Yes, and in some cases for as many years. And is not the cause of this stagnation and drought the lack of earnest, believing prayer ? And is not prayer a union of divine and human agency, the pleading of a believing soul, with an omnipotent God who has all power in heaven and on earth ? To many churches as to individuals the words of James may be applicable : "Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." Perhaps some of the Saviour's words

are specially applicable : “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name ; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

Time fails us to speak at length upon “divine and human agency in revivals,” as seen in its holding of protracted meetings during special efforts for the salvation of men. From Ezra’s day to the present does not the history of revivals prove their usefulness, and has there ever been a widespread revival apart from protracted meetings ? Such meetings may be sustained by human agency alone, but of them God may say, “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? ”

When a protracted meeting for special service is the outcome of preceding confession and supplication, there may soon be expected manifestations of divine power in multitudes coming to hear the word and to be saved. If there be tokens of the divine favor in protracted effort, let us beware that we do not substitute the human for the divine. Human agency must be subordinate to the divine. We must be as earthen vessels meet for the Master’s use. We must give his word to careless or anxious souls, and rely wholly upon his Spirit to convict and regenerate. We must not depend upon men or measures, however much blessed elsewhere. By human agency the ark is often shaken because human expedients are substituted for divinely prescribed instruction. Are we doing according to divine command or inspired example in allowing anxious inquirers or others, any human prop upon which to lean, such as a dependence upon the prayers of the church or advising them to go home and think over what has been said, instead of urging an immediate acceptance of Christ ?

“The divine and human” in revivals will always prove an efficacious agency when the human is subordinate to, and in harmony with, the divine. Many things are beyond the

power of human beings, and these God will never ask us to perform. Impossibilities God never demands, but obedience to his will must be rendered; and although human means cannot produce a revival, human means may be essential to it. Hindrances must be removed, and "fallow ground" must be broken up ere seed-sowing will be effectual. Humility must be cherished; empty vessels and trimmed lamps must be brought to his service; pitchers must be broken and trumpets blown at his command; and however valiant the soldier or keen his weapon of war, victory is not in man, but in God, and the shout of the victors must be, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

THE PASTOR'S VALUE.

REV. W. H. GEISTWEIT.

Not a few people, who ought to know better, will be apt to make disparaging contrasts between the pastor and the evangelist—saying what a young lady said to me not long since, “Why should not every pastor do what the evangelist does?” There is no purpose here to speak of the distinction between the pastor and the evangelist; but this may be said by way of elucidation: There is a difference between these men that is God-ordained; each man does his work; does the work for which he has come into the kingdom; and while the pastor can, in a measure, “do the work of an evangelist,” yet the evangelist can never attempt to do the work of a pastor.

There are not a few people who look upon the evangelist as a man of singular earnestness; as one who is more anxious to win men to Christ than the ordinary pastor. Perhaps this thought is given by the evangelist himself. He appears to have a monopoly of zeal, and frequently gives the impression that his walk with God is different from that of other people. And in so far as this idea gets hold of the masses of the people, by just that much is the faithful, hard-working pastor underestimated and unappreciated.

This about the evangelist. It is not theory, but from personal experience. The world in which the evangelist

lives is different from that lived in by any other man. From one year's end to another he is in an atmosphere charged with the most intense spiritual life. As he goes from place to place, he secures at the beginning the very cream of all the spiritual life in the community; not from one church only, but from all the churches, there is a rally to his help of the very best workers in the town. For weeks before, these people have been planning and praying for a great manifestation; and when the leader comes, he is lifted on the crest of the wave, and he cannot help himself. If he is honest and faithful, and intelligent, and understands his commission from God, he cannot fail to have great success, so far as numbers are concerned, in having people say, "I want to be a Christian." This experience is duplicated over and over again in the life of the evangelist. The work which taxes the nerves, requires the greatest amount of wisdom, the uttermost consecration, the personal, hand-to-hand touch with those who have so decided for Christ, the evangelist rarely does. If he does it, it is incidental, and not a part of his thought and purpose. One could wish that when people are brought under the influence of a gospel service, and there decide for Christ, that more could be done for them by way of personal touch with the word of God; but that is not the matter under discussion now. It is simply stated in order that my readers may see the permanent value of the patient, plodding pastor, who is often the subject of ridicule in times of great awakening.

It must be said to the credit of the best evangelists, that they see this matter fully, and know that their work would not have a tithe of the blessed results, if it were not for the pastors, whose faithful preaching, and teaching, and visiting had made all this possible. But the evangelist often

makes the mistake of giving people the impression that such results should follow every service. Do not blame your pastor for lack of spirituality, if the results of his work are not like those of the evangelist; if they were, the occupation of the evangelist would be gone. But in the divine economy it is recognized that the pastor has a definite place, and the evangelist has his. It is one thing to get a man upon his feet, but it is another thing to get that man to walk and go ahead in the Christian life.

And this about the pastor, also from experience, and not from theory : It is possible to "do the work of an evangelist," in the pastorate; but if you count success by hats and bonnets, the work of the average pastor is a dead failure. But *is* it a failure? Is that sermon a failure that does not bring some one to His feet? Is it just to say what is so often said, "Why, just think of the sermons that are preached every Sunday, and how small is the result!" Verily, no! Christ's sermon on the mount was not a success at the time it was delivered, measured by the mathematical standard. To put a sermon on one side and a certain number of converts on the other, and say that one is the product of the other, is to do violence to all of God's teaching concerning the building up of his kingdom. How can you measure the result of a sermon?—By no amount of figures. Given a man of consecrated heart and self-sacrificing life,—and the world is full of them,—let him go in and out among his people, preach faithfully and fearlessly, and he cannot fail to have results—not perhaps in the overwhelming way the evangelist counts things, but in the way that the evangelist *knows* things, if he knows anything!

Measure the worth of a sermon? Here is a congregation; the sermon is an ordinary one. The congregation is made up of tired people, weary mothers, perplexed business

men, young men on the verge of ruin, etc. As the preacher goes on (giving living bread, and not "critical" stones), yonder tired mother opens her heart, and is inspired with new hope to go on in her pressed home-life; the business man hears God's voice, and he, too, is encouraged; some word reaches that young man, and he is kept from doing the evil thing he had planned that very night. But no demonstration is made; in some way the burning words of the preacher have lifted the whole congregation heavenward. Measure that sermon? Yes, if you can measure a sunbeam; yes, if you can measure a mother's love; yes, if you can measure a spiritual uplift by the miserable yardsticks of human measurement! No, no, my friend, the effect of that word given in that service, can only be measured by Him in that day when the final judgment of every man's work is made.

I cannot speak of the value of your pastor in his personal touch on your life. If I should stop to-day and open my heart that is so full of the sorrows of other people, who have buried them there (and they are safe), and count the lives that have been touched here and there, and *saved*, it would be committing the sin of self-glory; and I can say this for most pastors. Let me tell you what they want. Go to them and say something like this: "I have been astonished at what I find myself able to do; for several weeks I have done, day and night, just what the evangelist has asked me to do; in order to be obedient I have carried my meals to the service, so as to be in my place. I have been as bold as a lion in talking to people. I have never done this before. If you will forgive me, I will be the same to you that I have been to the evangelist — and more." Then I can tell you what he will do. His eyes will be full; he may blurt out a "Thank you;" but when he gets alone in his study,

he will be a boy again, and his heart and eyes will overflow in gratitude to God that he must not in the future do not only his work, but yours also. If this shall be the result of the revival, it will be worth more than a few thousand new Christians; it will mean many thousands more, and a new type of spiritual life in all the churches. And in this direction the work of the evangelist will have been greater than he can ever measure.

THE EVANGELIST IN REVIVALS.

BY REV. E. A. WHITTIER.

THE WORK OF THE EVANGELIST IS A SCRIPTURAL ONE.

IN Ephesians 4 : 11, Paul enumerates the various offices of the ministry, when he says : “ And he gave some apostles ; and some prophets ; and some evangelists ; and some pastors and teachers.” The meaning of the word “ evangelist ” is “ publisher of good tidings.” In this passage of scripture they are represented as standing between the apostles and prophets and pastors and teachers.

We quote now from Smith's Bible Dictionary on the work of the evangelist : “ It follows from what has been said, that the calling of the evangelist is expressed by the *Kereussein* rather than *Didaskein* — it is the proclamation of the glad tidings to those who have not known them rather than the instruction and pastoral care of those who have believed and been baptized. And this is also what we gather from 2 Tim. 4 : 25. Timothy is to preach the word. In doing this he is to fulfill the work of an evangelist. It follows, also, that the name denotes a work rather than an order. The evangelist might or might not be a bishop, elder, or deacon. The apostles, so far as they evangelized, might claim the title, though there were many evangelists who were not apostles.” The same writer in Smith's Dictionary expresses the belief, that “ the brother

whose praise was in the gospel," was one of Paul's companions known as an evangelist. Philip was among the number set apart to this work, and he went down to Samaria, where Christ once preached the gospel, and as one great result of this evangelistic tour, many were converted, and so "there was great joy in that city," even though there was some excitement and some opposition aroused, as when the apostles visited towns and cities preaching the gospel. Soon the Spirit of the Lord carries Philip away to the desert, when he guides the eunuch to Christ and baptizes him. Philip's work, so far as we have any history of it, was like that of modern evangelists, largely in revivals.

According to the early Fathers the work of the evangelist, soon after the apostolic age, became that of a Bible reader, varying somewhat from that of the apostolic age. So, to-day, his work is somewhat different in lands where the gospel has been preached a long time, although in essence it is the same — a "publisher of good tidings" with no pastoral charge, preaching the "good news" to those who are without.

MODERN EVANGELISM COVERS THE LAST ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS.

From the early centuries onward to the time of the Reformation there were very few evangelists, comparatively speaking, none in those dark ages. The Reformers were not, strictly speaking, evangelists, although in many cases doing a similar work. It is now about one hundred and fifty years since George Whitefield began to preach in the open air as an evangelist — then almost a beardless youth. A few months later John and Charles Wesley began open-air preaching as evangelists. Whitefield and the Wesleys found the churches and ministry full of formalism, worldli-

ness and even immorality in Great Britain, and spirituality was "at a low ebb" in America. How God spoke through those men to thousands and thousands, and used them to send forward a mighty wave of salvation in England and America, the historian tells us in part, but the whole results eternity alone can reveal.

In America, the coming of George Whitefield was like the coming of Titus to Paul. How he was welcomed by such pious souls as Dr. Jonathan Edwards, the Tennants, and others whose hearts had bled on account of the low state of Zion! The half-way covenant received its death-blow in this revival; the churches were lifted out of their long sleep, and many were saved. Dr. Jonathan Edwards, the Tennants, and others became, for the time-being, evangelists, and thus "the word of God grew and multiplied."

For about twenty years preceding the nineteenth century we hear of but few evangelists, and at the same time there is a decline of piety in America. There are great rejoicings over the liberty and independence gained as a nation, and yet there comes a great bondage to French infidelity and atheism. At the opening of the present century the revival breaks out again in great power — especially in the South. Pastors and laymen are compelled to labor temporarily as evangelists in "protracted meetings." In the midst of this work Dr. Nettleton, the conservative, humble man, enters upon the work of an evangelist; then closely following him Dr. Chas. G. Finney thunders forth the word of God, with his logical grasp of truth, the whole land feeling the power of his ministry, many thousands rejoicing in hope as one result of his labors. Then follows Dr. Edward N. Kirk, "the loving disciple," and Elder Jacob Knapp, the stern, eccentric preacher — the blessed record of whose labors, with those of Elder Jabaz Swan, is in heaven.

Evangelists more or less widely known increased, men like Dr. A. B. Earle, who is now nearing the time when he must lay down the sickle. Finally, the lay-evangelist movement, led on by D. L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey, is ushered in.

In the judgment of many, we have reached an important and yet somewhat critical point in evangelism. It is "the enchanted ground" for evangelists, we fear. The work has become popularized to a great extent; and yet we believe the work was never better manned by large numbers of intelligent, earnest evangelists.

COUNSEL TO CHURCHES AND PASTORS.

1. Do not depend too much upon evangelists. Although their labors tend to promote revivals more generally throughout the land, yet as churches and pastors, remember you are dependent only upon the Holy Spirit. Willing you should be, wherever it seems wise to do so, to call in their aid; yet do not wait for, or upon man for this work, but upon Him who has said: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit." Zech. 4:6.

2. Encourage only men of good report to labor as evangelists. The land has been flooded with evangelists during the past ten years or more, some of whom are unstable and lacking in true Christian character. Some of them have fallen and wounded the cause. Even some of the true and faithful ones may sometimes have been ensnared by Satan; but others were novices, and soon "fell into condemnation of the devil." The Lord may use even an ungodly man for awhile in carrying on his work; but in the end the work is not as salutary as when a true man labors for Christ. Great temptations lie along the pathway of the evangelist, and great grace is needed in this department of work.

3. Use evangelists sparingly. This caution is for the few, and not for the many. There are ripe fields even in Massachusetts, where the labors of an evangelist would be a godsend to both pastor and people; but there are other fields suffering to-day from overwork in that direction. The best fields for such labors are places where no evangelist has been on the soil for several years, like Pittsfield, Mass., where God used Brothers Pratt and Birdsall so wonderfully

4. Do not hamper evangelists. If it seems wise to call in an evangelist, let him work as fully as you desire to work in your own chosen field. Having confidence enough in the piety and good sense of the man to call him to your aid, let him "work in his own harness," and thus the best results will follow.

A WORD OF ADVICE TO THE EVANGELIST.

1. He must be humble. Pride is one of the great temptations of the evangelist. When very successful, flattery will meet him from men and from Satan as well. If the work drags, then his pride of reputation will be attacked, and this may lead him to scold the churches and pastors. This he must resist, or his power will wane.

2. He must be wise. It is said of Gen. Grant, that "he never lost his head in the most exciting or discouraging circumstances." So the evangelist, of all men, ought to be level-headed.

3. He must have large spiritual discernment. Many things in revival work may seem to be genuine, which are not. Our people are mercurial in their temperament. The evangelist must not play upon the feelings of the people, or encourage this state of things too much. Whatever emotions the Spirit of God begets, he should not repress,

even if men and women should fall to the earth under powerful convictions, as doubtless has been the case sometimes since the days of Paul ; but this must not be deemed essential, or favored as such, by Christian workers.

4. He must know his place. He is not pastor. He cannot be, if a true evangelist. He comes to aid the pastor ; to bridge over chasms, if chasms exist between pastor and people, and not to widen them. As an evangelist, he is to preach the preaching God bids him to preach, no man forbidding him ; he is to take special lead of the meetings generally, but when his special work is done, he should quietly pass away, bidding the people remember “Jesus only,” and the word of God.

5. He must honor the Spirit and the word of God. Thank God ! The day of mere sensationalism is passing away among pastors and evangelists. Let it pass away before the brighter dawning of the Spirit and the word of God !

When the evangelist comes “filled with the Spirit,” he will testify of Christ and not of himself. His message will be freighted with the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit ; then only healthy results will follow his preaching and labors, and pastors and churches will have abundant reason to thank God that he gave some to be evangelists as well as some to be pastors and teachers !

THE PEOPLE'S PART IN REVIVAL WORK.

No pastor can do anything in revival work without the co-operation of his people. It matters not how earnest he himself may be, if his church is cold and indifferent, his earnestness will avail nothing. Indeed, the primary idea of revival implies the awakening and arousing of the church itself to power, zeal, and activity, as preparatory to successful work on behalf of the unsaved. The pastor is a leader, and occupies a position in the church similar to that of an officer in an army on the field. The officer's duty is not to do all the fighting, but to lead his men into battle, and inspire them by example and word to courage and heroism. The pastor's duty is not himself to carry the gospel to every creature in the limits of his parish, but to lead his people in evangelistic work, and through them reach every creature. There are many pastors who seem to forget this. They are most laborious themselves in preaching and visiting from house to house, and in all efforts to save men, but they never get any other person to work. It is very evident that with all their own exhausting efforts, such pastors do far less in the end than if they gave part of their best energy and strength to organizing their people for active service, and sending them to do the work.

Any man would better get ten other persons to work than do ten persons' work himself. The most successful pastors are not those who do the largest amount of personal work, but those who thoroughly organize their congrega-

tions, inspiring their people with earnestness and zeal, and leading them into effective service. The true idea of the church is not that all its power lies in the ordained ministry. We are just learning a little of the possibilities of service there are in the laity. In the hearts and lives of our people in all the churches there are energies and powers, latent perhaps and undeveloped as yet, but truly there, which if called out and set to work, would yield incalculable results for the Master. It is the pastor's work to develop these powers and capacities for usefulness in his church, and to lead these true and faithful followers of Christ into fields of active service for him.

If the people are helpful in promoting a revival, they must be brought themselves into a revival state. If a church is spiritually dead and cold, it will be impossible through it to get the fire to burn outside. Unrevived Christians are poor conductors of spiritual life. The pastor's preaching can reach the world only through the hearts and lives of his own people; and if they are not impressed by it, he cannot expect that worldly ones on the outside can be reached through them. The pastor who desires and prays for a work of grace in the community and an ingathering of souls from the world, must get his own people close to Christ and full of the Holy Spirit. But even then the pastor's responsibility in the matter does not cease. In a regiment of soldiers in the field, courage and enthusiasm are not enough for victorious warfare—there must be organization and leadership as well.

There is scarcely a limit to the amount of work which a thoroughly quickened church can do in a community; but for effectiveness there must be method and direction.

When a pastor has his people aroused, he must be ready to tell them what to do, and send or lead them out to the

work which is to be done. It is just at this point that many seem to fail. They do not know what to do with a revived church.

It is difficult to give definite suggestions regarding this part of a pastor's duty. Fields differ, and methods must be varied accordingly. No method can be commended as always and absolutely the best. Even in the same field, the plans of this year would oftentimes better not be followed next year. There is power in freshness and variety. The last place in the world for hard, uniform, stereotyped machine work is in the church. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." And there must be liberty in the methods of work, for God's Spirit will not be confined to any routine methods of ours. Much must always depend, therefore, upon the spiritual alertness and wisdom of a pastor in the formation of plans and work for his people.

One of the lessons to be learned from Nehemiah's work in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem is the value of organization. As we read the account, we find not only that the people had a mind to work, but they had a wise leader, who had also a mind for systematic organization. No two or three families were found working at the same piece of wall. Had this been so, some portion of the wall would have been finished in a very brief time, while other parts would not have been finished at all. But these earnest builders were so distributed that the whole wall in all its circuit, arose simultaneously, and when one part was completed, the whole was finished. Pastors may learn from Nehemiah so to organize their people and systematize the work they want them to do, that into every obscure street and court and corner some of them will go with the invitation of the gospel.

There are few more instructive and suggestive pictures in the gospel than that of our Lord feeding the hungry mul-

titude on the mountain side. We are told that he gave the bread to the disciples, and the *disciples* to the people. If the disciples had merely eaten their own fill and had then sat down, holding the bread in their hands, the people on the other circles would have starved while the provision was there ready to feed them. Christ has put the loaves of the bread of life into the hands of the people. Outside the circle of disciples there lie great multitudes, perishing with spiritual hunger. If Christ's disciples with the loaves in their hands simply feed themselves and then sit still, what will become of the hungry people beyond them? The gospel cannot get to the unsaved excepting through the hands and hearts of the saved. The world cannot learn of Christ except through Christ's own followers.—*Presbyterian*.

HOW TO PROMOTE REVIVALS.

D. L. MOODY.

FIRST, *we must believe in revivals.* I do not see how any one who reads his Bible can say one word against them. Why, look at the great revivals in Moses' time, and those under Joshua and David and Josiah. Think of the great gathering that Ezra had, when all the people stood in the street all day for a revival meeting. Moreover, every denomination that I know anything about is the result of some revival. The Episcopalians say they are apostolic. That takes them back to Pentecost, when three thousand were converted in a single day. The Lutherans proclaim in their very name the great revival under Luther. The Quakers sprang from a revival under George Fox; the Methodists from that under Wesley; and more than that, four fifths of the names on the church rolls to-day are those of persons converted in a revival. They make our best workers. They are more likely to hold out. A man converted and entering a cold church is like a baby thrown into a snow-drift. But in times of revival the church is warm, ready to receive the new-born souls. I don't believe in spasmodic efforts, when the church rouses for a few days, only to go back to sleep again for a year or for five years; but God has his special harvest seasons in nature, why not in grace? The longer I live, the more I believe in revivals.

But second, we must get things out of the way for a revival. When the Saviour came of old, John cried, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." I believe that in many places the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, and his blessing withheld, simply because we crowd him out of our churches. We hold meetings during the week of prayer, and Christians are getting warmed and revived, and the hearts of sinners are melting; but the moment the week is over, we clear the way for sociables and lectures and concerts, things which distract the minds of the unconverted, and scatter their serious thoughts. Shall it be so in your churches this winter, brethren? Will you gratify the eyes and ears of the people around you without making one earnest effort to save their perishing souls? How important it is that the meetings should be continued, that room should be made for the Lord's work. What a wave of blessing would sweep over this country if our churches would all agree to let all these things go this winter, and give themselves with all their might to the work of saving souls!

And third, if we want a revival in our churches, we must pray for it. It isn't great preaching that we want, brethren, so much as it is great praying. The work is the Lord's, not man's; and if Gabriel were to preach to a church six months, not a soul would be revived, not a sinner converted, without the Holy Spirit. All our quickening must come from his blessed presence and power. And the earnest, importunate prayer of one person, one poor, humble brother or sister who will not let God go without an answer, may call down the blessing.

One of the first series of meetings I ever attended was started by a poor sick man, who, lying flat on his back, became so exercised over the condition of the church that he could not rest. The church was dead, and the young folks

around were all unsaved. He sent for the brethren of the church, and entreated them to pray for a revival. But they were too cold, and too much wrapped up in the world. Then he sent for the sisters, and begged them to pray, and at last a few of them did so. The Lord revived their hearts. Others were added to them, and when I came, they had been before God many days entreating for a blessing. The first night I preached, all was cold. It seemed like beating the air. But that night at midnight the son of one of the elders came down to his father's room crying out, "Father, pray for my lost soul." The Lord came suddenly to his temple, and we had a great blessing. Now, is there any one so weak or humble that he or she can't do as much as that sick man did? You can pray yourself, and perhaps you can get some one else to unite with you in prayer, and the Lord will add to your numbers, and your own souls will be revived. And once let the church be set on fire of God, and there will be no trouble about the unconverted. Red-hot coals will kindle a fire wherever they fall.

But fourth, and last, not only pray for a revival, but work for it. Many people act as if the verse in the Bible were, "Let him that heareth *pray*, Come." They pray for their friends, their children—they have prayed for them for years, but they have never said come. "Let him that heareth say, Come." How many men in this city to-day only need an invitation to bring them to Christ! How many mothers have talked to their children about their behavior, their dress, their studies, but never one word about their immortal souls! "Ah," you say, "I can't talk to them; my own life is so inconsistent!" And that is true. The less any Christian indulging in known sin says about religion the better; but that does not lessen, it only increases

our responsibility. It is as if a father should command a child to do something, and the child should tie up his own hands, and say, "Father, I can't." Come out from that sin—from all sin—for the sake of the souls who are stumbling over you into perdition. Don't wait a moment. Go to them and confess your unfaithfulness, and ask them right then and there to come to Christ. Would not the Spirit use such a witness as that would be?

Brethren, we have this matter of a revival very largely in our hands. God is ready—are we? Do we really want a revival more than anything else in the world? Are we praying for it? Are we determined to pray for it until it comes? Are we living such lives that God can hear us? "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will *not* hear me." Are we saying, "Come," as well as praying it? The Lord help us all to prepare the way of the Lord, that he may come among us in power!

WORK PREPARATORY TO REVIVALS.

REV. HERRICK JOHNSON, D. D.

1. *The pastor must begin with his own heart.* A fire in the pulpit is the best means of kindling a fire in the pews. The pastor should not talk about a revival, but be revived. Let him expect nothing from his people that is not first in his own heart. He should not bemoan deadness in the church before the congregation until he has in the closet bemoaned deadness in himself before God, and his own want of love for Christ. No searching and rebuking sermons to his flock will avail much, if he has not already felt the rebuke of them as the truth has searched his own soul.

2. Thus humbled, penitent, burdened, yearning for the presence and power of Christ, let the pastor lay his heart open to the elders or deacons, or whoever are his constituted spiritual counselors. They are ordained with him to the care and watch of the church, and his natural helpers in every good work.

3. *The pastor should now aim at great searchings of heart with his people Sabbath after Sabbath, preaching to the church, to the church, TO THE CHURCH, blow on blow.* Let this be followed up in the closer contact of the prayer meetings. Compel Christians for the time being to forget the impenitent in their great concern about their own condition before God as unfaithful to Christ in love and service. The tendency is to turn at once to the impenitent. The impression

prevails that God is not working, if conversions are not taking place. The moment some Christians begin to pray for a work of God, they lose all sight and thought of the church in a great zeal for converts. Let the pastor correct this habit, get his people to heart-searching and penitence and confession and humbling of soul before God, and have them understand that this is more acceptable to God, and more likely to secure his large blessing than a sudden zeal for the impenitent, and that they are in no condition to do the ungodly much service until they have humbled themselves before God.

4 As soon as the pastor finds a heart kindled with any unusual emotion, or bowed with an unwonted sense of sin, or yearning with any unwonted desire for God's glory, let him get along side of that heart, lay it and his own together, and in the fellowship of that common sense of sin and yearning for a blessing, let them keep company at the altar of prayer.

5. Find a second or third also kindled. Have with these a special weekly appointment of half an hour for communion and prayer, pleading God's special promises and bearing special cases before God.

6 Arrange a half hour for concert of prayer among the mothers in Israel, the devout and godly women, who will agree quickly to observe a certain half hour, or quarter of an hour of the day together, or better perhaps alone, for prayer for the outpouring of God's Spirit.

7 Call the Sunday-school teachers together, and have them interested in the same way for their scholars. Thus get circles of prayer started, different interests enlisted, many "twos" or "threes" agreed as touching one thing.

8. Increase appointments for public meetings only as there is demand for them. Have the interest compel the

meetings, and do not appoint extra meetings to get up interest.

9. With a prepared church the pastor may turn to the impenitent, and pour the hottest shot into their ranks, preaching the truths most directly adapted to bring them to Christ, with the fullest assurance that the conditions are now present for a great awakening and multiplied victories. I do not say a pastor is to wait for this before he makes appeal to the ungodly. I do not say that souls will not be given him, though he have no such aroused and humbled and praying church behind him ; but I do say that no large numbers will ordinarily be born in connection with a church. nine tenths of whose members are asleep or drowned in worldliness.

REVIVALS—HOW TO PROMOTE THEM.

FROM A LECTURE BY CHARLES G. FINNEY, D. D.

PROTRACTED meetings are not new, but have always been practiced in some form or other ever since there was a church on earth. The Jewish festivals were nothing else but protracted meetings. In regard to the *manner*, they were conducted differently from what they are now. But the *design* was the same,—to devote a series of days to religious services in order to make a more powerful impression of divine things upon the minds of the people. All denominations of Christians, when religion prospers among them, hold protracted meetings. In Scotland they used to begin on Thursday, at all their communion seasons, and continue until after the Sabbath. The Episcopalians, Baptists, and Methodists all hold protracted meetings. I will suggest a few things that ought to be considered in regard to them.

1. In appointing them, regard should be had to the circumstances of the people; whether the church are able to give their attention and devote their time to carry on the meeting. In some instances this rule has been neglected. Some have thought it right to break in upon the necessary business of the community. In the country they would appoint the meeting in harvest time, and in the city in the height of the business season, when all the men were *necessarily* occupied and pressed with their temporal labors. In

defense of this course it is said that *our* business should always be made to yield to *God's* business; that eternal things are of so much more importance than temporal things that worldly business of any kind, and *at any time*, should be made to yield and give place to a protracted meeting. But the worldly business in which we are engaged is not *our* business. It is as much *God's* business, and as much our duty as our prayers and protracted meetings are. If we do not consider our business in this light, we have not yet taken the first lesson in religion; we have not learned to do all things to the glory of God. With this view of the subject, separating our business from religion, we are living six days for ourselves and the seventh for God. REAL DUTIES NEVER INTERFERE WITH EACH OTHER.

2. Ordinarily a protracted meeting should be conducted through, and the labor chiefly performed by, *the same minister*, if possible. Sometimes protracted meetings have been held and dependence placed on ministers coming in from day to day. And they would have no blessing. And the reason was obvious. They did not come in a state of mind to enter into the work, and they did not know the state of people's minds, so as to know what to preach. Suppose a person who was sick should call in a different physician every day. He would not know what the symptoms had been, nor what was the course of the disease or of the treatment, nor what remedies had been tried, nor what the patient could bear. Why, he would certainly kill the patient. Just so in a protracted meeting carried on by a succession of ministers — none of them get into the spirit of it, and generally they do more hurt than good.

A protracted meeting should not, ordinarily, be appointed unless they can secure the right kind of help, and

get a minister or two who will agree to stay on the ground till the meeting is done. Then they will probably secure a rich blessing.

3. There should not be so many public meetings as to interfere with the duties of the closet and of the family. Otherwise Christians will lose their spirituality and let go their hold of God, and the meeting will run down.

4. Families should not put themselves out so much in entertaining strangers as to neglect prayer and other duties. It is often the case that when a protracted meeting is held, some of the principal families in the church, I mean those who are principally relied on to sustain the meetings, do not get into the work at all. And the reason is that they are encumbered with much serving. They often take needless trouble to provide for guests who come from a distance to the meeting, and lay themselves out very foolishly to make an entertainment not only comfortable, but sumptuous. It should always be understood that it is the duty of families to have as little working and parade as possible, and to get along with their hospitality in the easiest way, so that they may all have time to pray, and go to the meeting, and attend to the things of the kingdom.

5. By all means guard against keeping unnecessarily late hours. If people keep late hours night after night, they will inevitably wear out the body, and their health will fail, and there will be a reaction. They sometimes allow themselves to get so excited as to lose their sleep, and become irregular in their meals, till they break down, and a reaction must come. Unless there is the greatest pains taken to keep regular, the excitement will get so great that nature will give way, and they run down, and the work stops.

6. All sectarianism should be carefully avoided. If a sectarian spirit breaks out, either in the preaching, or pray-

ing, or conversation, it will counteract all the good of the meeting.

7. Be watchful against placing dependence on a protracted meeting, as if that of itself would produce a revival. This is a point of great danger, and has always been so. This is the great reason why the church in successive generations has always had to give up her measures, because Christians had come to rely on them for success. So it has been in some places in regard to protracted meetings. They have been so blessed that in some places the people have thought that if they should have a protracted meeting, they would have a blessing, and sinners would be converted *of course*. And so they have appointed their meeting, without any preparation in the church, and just sent abroad for some minister of note and set him to preaching, as if that would convert sinners. It is obvious that the blessing would be withheld from a meeting gotten up in this way.

8. Avoid adopting the idea that a revival cannot be enjoyed without a protracted meeting. Some churches have got into a morbid state of feeling on this subject. Their zeal has become all spasmodic and feverish, so that they never think of doing anything to promote a revival only in that way. When a protracted meeting is held, they will seem to be wonderfully zealous, and then sink into a torpid state till another protracted meeting produces another spasm. And now multitudes in the church think it is necessary to give up protracted meetings because they are abused in this way. This ought to be guarded against in every church, so that they may not be driven to give them up, and lose all the benefits that protracted meetings are calculated to produce.

HOW TO SECURE A REVIVAL.

ELIJAH P. BROWN.

"And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, the wall of the city shall fall down flat." Joshua 6: 5.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." Heb. 11: 30.

I BELIEVE that one of the uses of this chapter is to teach us how to secure a revival. The first thing to be done is for the leader to exercise common sense and prudence and learn as much about the condition of the field in which he is to operate as circumstances will permit. It will not do for him blindly to preach without knowing something of the people to whom he is talking. He must go out and walk boldly around the walls and shirk no responsibility that confronts him. He must meet the Captain of the Host and get the plan of campaign and promise of victory from him. Routine duties must not be neglected, and surprise power must be utilized. It won't do to plod along in one way all the time. As soon as the enemy learns your tactics you have no advantage over him. When people do not know just what to expect, they will give you close attention. When Samson went at the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, it was the novelty of the thing that made it win. Had he made his charge with a sword, he would never have lived to have his hair cut. Don't be afraid of new music. The ram's horn did not sound a bit like the silver trumpet, and for that reason it attracted

more attention. The Bible says, "Sing a new song." Do n't be afraid to do it. There is a power in a new song when it breathes the right sentiment, especially when godly people sing it. Thousands have their hearts touched in that way who have them hardened against preaching. It was the priests who blew upon the ram's horn, not the lepers and camp followers.

One reason, sometimes, why there is no more power in the pulpit is because there is so much devil just behind it. Heart power in song is something that cannot be printed in a note book. A painted fire will not keep the room warm. Too many of our singers do not know any more about the gospel they sing than the town pump does about the taste of water. People who sing simply for bread and bouquets have no more unction than a music box. One of the great needs of the church is more prayer and less nonsense in the choir; more praise and less backbiting; more love in the heart and less fault-finding; more of a desire to honor God than there is to give a concert; more of reverence and less of frivolity; more seriousness and less giggling. There will not be so much artistic effect, but there will be more heart power. There may not be so much polish, but there will be more of the melody that stirs the soul and makes the sinner want to quit his meanness. The work must begin in the church, and continue until the people quit hanging back and are willing to help and be helped. Nothing can be done while everybody wants to be a brigadier general and nobody is willing to be a private soldier. It won't do to rush into action until every man learns his place, and is willing to stay in it. The people must be made to believe in their leader, and to believe he expects something. This will give them faith, and their faith will make them united, and when they get to the point where they all have a common purpose,

there will be no quarreling about the means to be used. It wont do for the leader to waver or lose patience. He must stand firm, and yet keep sweet in doing it. He must lead, not send. The word must be "come," not "go." If the leader does not seem to expect much, nobody else will. The fact that Joshua continued to go around the walls every day showed to his troops that he expected to take the city, and every day more of his men got to believing that he was going to do it, and when they all became united in that belief, the time had come to make the charge, and they got the city because they all believed they would. *Faith never goes home with an empty basket.*

SOME HINTS ABOUT REVIVALS.

REVIVALS do not come by accident. They are the results of the wise use of divinely appointed means. When these are used, a revival is as natural as the gathering of a harvest when the conditions of sowing and cultivating in nature have been complied with. The laws that govern in the kingdom of grace are just as real and unerring as those that control in the kingdom of nature. The one condition that comprehends all others is prayer. This is a vital truth worthy of all emphasis. Prayer evidences faith, begets activity, and stimulates inquiry. Prayer thus exerts a mighty influence on the hearts of believers, and serves to seal conviction of sin even on the most hardened subjects, making them easy trophies of saving grace. A genuine revival produces these results. They are the fruits of a praying, believing, and working church. The divine law and promise is, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

We have often heard the complaint by pastors when engaged in revival meetings, "We cannot get the unconverted to our services." There are many churches with an individual membership of from two to four or five hundred that do not have a dozen unconverted persons at the week-day evening revival service. Now, what does that prove — that the gospel is a failure, and that the cross has lost its attractive power? — By no means. Rather it is an intimation

to us that our methods of work are a failure. It is a suggestion to change our tactics. It is a still, small, but emphatic voice, saying, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." It is a reiteration of the command, "Go ye into the highways and compel them to come in." It is a call to more thorough personal work.

The conductor of revival meetings has need to study variety in his meetings. He should avoid falling into ruts. Sameness begets tameness and dullness. He should be inventive. He should not be afraid sometimes to take the congregation by surprise. Meetings should not always begin and close in the same way. The same hymns should not be sung at every service, nor the same ones asked to offer prayer or to speak. The leader of a revival service needs wisdom. "He that winneth souls is wise." He should pray for this winning wisdom. This wisdom is sometimes spoken of as tact. It is the highest wisdom. It is what the Holy Spirit uses. He uses a variety of methods in producing conviction and conversion. He is not confined to any particular form. He is infinite in his resources and appliances. We have, as yet, but the faintest conception of his mighty power. If we would but open our hearts to his enthronement, and yield our will and our entire spiritual nature to his omnipotent sway, we should experience and witness marvelous displays of divine power.

Another suggestion is this: In presenting the truth through preaching or exhortation in revival meetings, do not wander far from the great essential, central ideas of salvation. Keep close to those vital principals on which saving faith may lay hold; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. It is not all religious talk you hear, even in revival meetings under the name of preaching, that has enough gospel in it to save a soul. In

every meeting the way of life should be made so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.

Speaking of over-anxiety to have people join the church, the *Christian Advocate* says : "The love of numbers is often a snare. Ten genuine converts out of twenty inquirers is better than ten from a hundred public manifestations. Pastors and earnest workers should not seek to save men by masses, but by individuals."

The same paper also gives to parents some good advice respecting small children, together with a few practical suggestions to pastors and other leaders of meetings, as follows : "Your children should not, as a rule, be taken to evening revival meetings. Many of the so-called 'gospel hardened' were made such by indiscretion in this regard. Epidemic excitement is pernicious to children, who will innocently profess anything.

"The words and phrases, properly used in instructing older inquirers are often unintelligible to young children, and the spectacle of excitements attending general religious awakenings is confusing to them. An unstable mental and moral equilibrium has often resulted from keeping children up till 11 o'clock at night for weeks together. Afternoon meetings, conducted by elect ladies, with the superintendence of the pastor, and the aid of parents and teachers, should be held for them; and the sooner they are classified for instruction the better, whether they think that they are converted or not."

It may not always be practicable to hold separate meetings for children. Usually, however, this can be done. The Sunday-school may be turned into an evangelistic service. Teachers can then talk to their pupils face to face respecting the personal acceptance of Christ. They may easily and wisely lead them to a distinct committal of themselves to a Christian life.

Other children's meetings may be held with leaders having the proper spiritual capabilities. The pastor need not always attend these meetings, though he should plan for them and know what is done in them. He should be the inventive, aggressive, versatile leader in all the work of winning souls in the field committed to him for cultivation.
—*Religious Telescope.*

HOW TO AWAKEN FRESH INTEREST IN OUR CHURCHES.

D. L. MOODY.

“How to Awaken Fresh Interest in our Churches?” It is a most important question. There is not a Christian man or woman but ought to be interested in it. What is more, we ought to take it to heart, because not only our own families are interested in this matter, but all those about us. If the church is cold and formal, there is no chance of reaching the young people—that is sure; and what we want to-day, I think, all over this country is a fresh interest. The first thing that we have got to discover is that we are in a low state spiritually.

I think the great trouble with the churches is that we are too well satisfied with the results. We are rich and increased in goods, and we need nothing. And until we see our need, we will not be hungering and thirsting for fresh life and fresh power in the churches; but the moment we do wake up to the fact that we need it, I think there will be no more trouble about God opening the way and showing us what we need to do.

We are not to rely on the sword of Gideon alone, nor upon God alone; we have got to put the two together. I think every child of God ought to work as if everything depended upon him, and on the other hand, pray as if everything depended upon God. A great many people seem to

think that revivals come like famines and like hurricanes, and that they have nothing to do with it; that God will come in his own time; and they sit down, fold their arms and say, "When it pleases God to revive his work, he will do it; but of course we can't do anything. There will be a fresh interest when God comes to revive his work."

I firmly believe it is in our power to have a new interest in the church of which we are members if we are living rightly, if we are seeking and desiring it above everything else. The question comes, How? Well, if everything is flat in the church, and the church, and the church meetings have gotten into a groove and into a rut, and it is hard to get new life and new zeal into the church, and the same ones do all the praying, and the young people take no interest in the meetings, and the minister is really burdened himself, I would make this suggestion: Let him go to the fathers and mothers of the church congregation who have children that have gone astray, for whom they are anxious (for fathers and mothers do feel anxious for their children), and talk to them privately and say, "Mother, don't you want your children reached?" You will not find a mother or father in the church but will say they do. They are not so dead or asleep but that they want their children blessed and reached. But are we doing all we can to reach them?

Then I suggest that we have special prayer meetings, not for the church, not for the world, but for ourselves. Suppose we get twenty or thirty or forty people together to pray, and let the work of God begin in our own hearts. Let parents—let all Christians—get quickened themselves and pray for power, and then when they have got their own hearts quickened and their own lives strengthened and blessed, let them call in the congregation and have a public meeting; and when the minister and others that are

taking part are speaking, let the rest be praying, and how long do you think it would be before there would be fresh interest in the church? How long do you think it would be before there would be people inquiring what they must do to be saved? I never in my life found an anxious church that did n't find anxious inquirers. I never saw a Christian really burdened for the salvation of souls, but there were souls about that Christian inquiring what they must do to be saved.

I remember the first time I was ever in a real revival I was invited to go down into a little town in the State of Michigan. A minister, who was a perfect stranger to me, came to the depot and met me and took me to his house to dinner. After dinner he took me out to the meeting. There were about twenty-five wives and mothers on their knees, as I went into that house, weeping and praying to God to bless their unconverted children and their unconverted husbands. It seemed as if I was at the very gate of heaven. Then he took me off to another end of the town and introduced me to an old elder who was dying with consumption. When he was given up and could not get out of the house, he began to wake up to the fact that he had not been a faithful steward. He must soon give an account to God of his stewardship. There was not a young person in that congregation who was a member of the church. Not one of the sons or daughters of the officers and elders or members of the church was a member of the church. There had not been a revival there for a great many years. He was soon to stand at the bar of God and give an account of his stewardship, and he began to pray. He got himself revived first. That is the first thing to do — begin with ourselves. If we want fresh interest, let us not go around to some one else, but let us pray to God to

revive our hearts first. Let us get quickened first. Well, he got quickened. Then he sent for his brother elders and told them how he felt, and wanted to have them pray. They had become so discouraged and disheartened that they said it was no use. Then he sent for the male portion of the church and talked to them. They had become so discouraged that they said there was no use. Then he sent for the mothers and lady members of the church, and that old dying elder pleaded with them to meet together to pray God to revive his work, and that had been going on two weeks when I got there. That night I preached, and it seemed as if I was preaching against the air. It seemed as if every word came back to me. But that night, about midnight, a boy came down stairs to his father, who was a member of the church and a professed Christian, and said, "Father, I want to have you pray for me." The father said he could not pray. He didn't sleep any that night. But the next morning at the prayer-meeting he got up and told us that, and said he wanted to have us pray for him. A father that professed to be a Christian and could not pray for his own boy who was weeping over his sins! Well, we prayed for him, and, inside of twenty-four hours there was not a young person, whose father or mother was a member of that church, upward of twelve years old, that did not give evidence of being converted. God came suddenly to his temple, and there was a mighty work—I think one of the grandest, one of the best works I have ever seen in my life. The work was revived when the church began to pray to God to revive the church.

Then, I think we have got to have a personal effort. We have got to go and see these people personally. If they don't come out in the church publicly, we must go to their houses. That is the way the apostles did. Let the

elders and the wardens, and the church stewards, and ministers, and the burdened, anxious ones, go and see one another, talk to them in their homes, pray with them, and just lift up one united voice; that is, all you can get united, and if there are but five voices, get those five to pray. If there are ten, get those ten to pray, and hold up the church before God and pray him to revive his work, and he will not disappoint us.

Then another thing. When we do get up these meetings, let us bury this miserable stiffness. A man comes in and takes the lead of the meeting, and he is so stiff and formal he throws a stiffness all over the meeting. He gives out a long hymn, reads a long chapter, and says all he can think about it. Then he throws the meeting open, and there is a long pause; there is a coldness — a stiffness in the meeting, and the whole life is gone — no power. Let us bury this stiffness and get it out of the way. We want to be just as free and natural in the meetings as we are outside the meetings. Very often the very best part of our meetings is after they break up, and the people get to shaking hands with one another.

Another thing. To have fresh interest in our churches, I believe we have got to have some new music. Have now and then a new hymn. I don't object to the old hymns; they are good in their place, but when you come to hear them over and over again, right along, year in and year out, they lose their power; they lose their freshness; they don't take hold. Now, I am moving around a good deal, and I get into a good many churches, and generally they will open the meeting with "All Hail." That is a standard hymn; it is a glorious old hymn! God forbid I should say anything against it. But I have heard it right along for twenty years, and I would rather hear "Crown Him" —

the same thing — a little new, a little more life in it. Then they will give out “Jesus, Lover of My soul,” and “Come Thou Fount,” and “Just as I Am,” and about five, six, or seven hymns. They have been singing them in a good many churches, year in and year out, and the result is the young people have lost all interest. Young people like freshness. They like something new. And I don’t know why we should not have new songs and new music. If you want to wake up fresh interest in your churches, have some new hymns, new music. Throw some life and energy into it. A man that don’t throw life and energy into his business soon becomes a bankrupt. I believe it is the fault of the leaders. I believe they don’t seek to work up an interest.

Now, I know of a minister who was not near as able a man as the minister that preceded him. He could not preach nearly so good a sermon, but when he took the prayer meeting,—it was a little prayer meeting of about thirty or forty,—he first went to work and visited his members. He would say, “Mr. Jones, I never see you around to the Wednesday-night prayer meeting.” “Well, no, I don’t go.” “I would like to have you come around. We have interesting meetings. I would like to see you there and hear a word from you.” “Why, I couldn’t do that. I never did such a thing as that in my life.” “Well, you can’t begin any earlier. It will do you good. We would like to have you come around and let the friends know you are on the Lord’s side. It will do you good.” Then he talked the same way to A and B, and that man’s prayer meetings have averaged the last two or three years six or eight hundred. He works them up, and he don’t allow two or three men to kill the meeting. You know there are a good many men who just make a business of

killing a meeting. They talk and talk and never say anything, just ruining the church. This minister would go around kindly to those men and say, "Brother, I want to get out some new voices. You have spoken now at every meeting for the last three or four months, and we don't want to hear any more from you for the present." He just keeps down those men that kill the meetings. Now, it is my duty, if I am leader of a meeting, to look after the interest of that meeting, and if a man of that kind comes into the meeting, to go to him and tell him he is doing wrong; that he must keep still. I don't believe we can have a fresh interest in the church without working for it. I believe we get what we work for in religious things as we do in temporal things; and if we work for fresh interest in the church, and work for life and zeal, and to spread the influence of Christianity and Christ, we will not fail.

HOW TO SAVE SOULS.

REV. F. O. DICKEY.

THERE is much discussion of methods to be used in winning souls to Christ, but after all has been said, there remains the modicum of difficulty — “How?” The need of the hour is not so much *new* methods as the better use of Biblical methods.

Advertisements, orchestral music, and other attractions, by being properly used, may be helpful in “drawing the crowds,” but as personal evangelism is obtaining as the great need and power whereby churches shall be filled and souls saved, the *how* of evangelism increases in seriousness.

Given a Christian and a lost soul, salvation of that lost soul is possible. The responsibility of failure is not entirely upon the unsaved. Or, to put the matter more directly and emphatically, every Christian can and ought to be a soul-winner. If he is not, God has made a mistake, or the Christian is blameworthy. To say that God is mistaken, is blasphemy. It is the privilege and duty of every converted person to become the best possible evangelist.

THE HOW.

The *how*, God explains in the most excellent text-book on “personal work,” — the Bible. Who ever becomes practically acquainted with Jesus’ rules for saving souls, will not enter heaven empty handed. Christ said, “I will make you fishers of men” — a promise of *how* and of success.

This was not to men of superior native ability or literary acquirements; but to minds of common mould, capable of impression and instruction by the Master, Teacher, and Saviour. Whosoever is able to catch fish, may catch men after being instructed by Jesus.

He lays down as a fundamental rule,—love. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The passion of Christ for a lost world must become the passion of the Christian, if he converts men. He must love men, as men, for Jesus’ sake. Such love will make him oblivious to caste, indifferent to station, regardless of wealth, ignoring all human distinctions. His love will be all inclusive. The leprous mendicant and the aristocratic Zaccheus, the gentle Mary and the adulteress, will alike be urgently and prayerfully sought for the kingdom of heaven. A Christ-like love will beget the apostle’s state of heart: “I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart: for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites.” This love will urge a person to study that he may “show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.” God’s approval being the attainment sought through the noblest service possible to men or angels, the results of which are so infinitely glorious if successful, or, infinitely awful if unsuccessful, that nothing earthly can be compared with them. Every soul who knows the love of Christ will make that study the best effort of his powers.

STUDY MEN.

Which is of greatest importance among so many studies, is difficult to state; but we will name first, that of human nature. Jesus “knew what was in man,” and so recog-

nized the difference between a Pharisee and a publican, and acted accordingly. His treatment of Nicodemus and of the Samaritan woman differed greatly in the one from the other. A physician who attempts to heal all manner of diseases with physic and plasters, will have many funerals.

Brother Rundell's tract, "Christ and the Inquirer," is briefly descriptive of the many varied ways in which Christ dealt with the unsaved. It also emphasizes the need of "knowing your man." Study critically the moral tongue, feel carefully the intellectual pulse, apply the thermometer for the physical temperature. The whole man is involved. The detective discovers his man by approaching him on the "blind side." Every one has an approachable side. The Christian worker should know which side that is of each unsaved person he seeks.

Then study to know your man — what he believes, what he loves, his modes of thought, his associations, — in brief, make a mental biography of the person. Find some point of personal contact. The careful student will have discovered that point. The discovery made, wisely use it for the glory of God. The brook trout has a weakness for flies; not so the salmon. Know these matters, and be happy in doing "the right thing, in the right way, at the right time."

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES.

Another important study is the Bible. However others may relegate the word of God to the parlor table as an ornament, or to the mantel shelf, as a dust collector, Jesus' counsel for it is, "Search the Scriptures."

The best book on moral science is the Bible; make it your text-book on the anatomy of the human heart. An exhaustive examination is here needed. Skimming will not secure the cream. Faithful work, only, avails. It will open "hidden things" in one's own soul; it will also supply

knowledge of the "hidden things" in every soul. Faces may differ in form and color, but how similar are hearts in their deceitfulness and wickedness. The depth and kind of depravity is learned from the revelations of God. If this study has been what it should be, the attention will have been fixed upon the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Right acquaintance with this is crucial. Shortcoming here is wrongful, as it is dangerous. There are not a few from Ephesus here in Michigan, "who have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Others are like the ancient prophet, who stood upon the mount that he might hear God's voice in the strong wind, or terrible earthquake, or in the consuming fire — some external, physical manifestation. But the Lord was in none of these. The whisperings of the Spirit were instruction and authority and courage, whereby the prophet anointed kings and prophets who slew his and his Lord's enemies.

The Spirit spake to Philip, and he went wandering about the Ethiopian's caravan, hesitatingly and doubtingly; inquiring of this and another person, so that he would be assured that God had made no mistake? Such is the hypocrisy of modern godliness. It has the form but lacks the power (and directness) thereof—the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit was as definite in his instructions to Philip, as he was distinct in his voice. "Go, join thyself to this chariot." Philip went, and the eunuch was converted and baptized. Peter heard the voice of the Spirit, after God had cleansed his mind of a good bit of rubbish. Peter obeyed that voice, nothing doubting, Cornelius and his household were converted and baptized.

Christian worker, know thyself, as the temple of the Holy Ghost. "Acquaint thyself now with him." Know his voice, in order to distinguish it from all others. It is not

an uncertain voice. It is positive, sweet, full of love, even pathetic in its yearning for the souls of the lost.

The Bible is the only correct literature of the Holy Spirit and of his methods of salvation. Here we learn that the potency and motive in evangelism are begotten of the Holy Ghost. "To know him aright is life eternal" with a double meaning. This knowledge must be an increasing quantity, and richness of quality, in the Christian heart, for greatest equivalent of eternal life. The man of God ought also to know him intimately, in order to succeed in winning souls. His word to Zechariah is most modern ; viz., "Not by an army, nor by power, but by my Spirit," saith the Lord.

Permit me, therefore, to urge a study of the Old and New Testaments for a correct knowledge of the methods of the Holy Spirit in the soul. The saints of the Old Testament did not go aimlessly about the work of God. The genius of their own minds was not the sole resource. They were under specific instructions, and guided in the application thereof to legitimate results. Abraham was "called to go out into a place ; and he went into the land which God showed him." Moses, Gideon, Samson, David, Samuel—a great cloud of witnesses—surround us, from both the Old and New Testaments, with their testimony to the way the Spirit worked in them, while they wrought righteousness.

As we have learned of divine methods in the Christian heart, there has come to some a surprising revelation that the Holy Spirit works simultaneously in the heart of the soul seeker and in the heart of the unsaved. He has instructed the disciple to preach of sin and of righteousness, and of a judgment to come, and at the same time is convincing the unsaved of the same truths.

Philip is instructed to join himself to the chariot, and the eunuch is being prepared for the words of Philip. Peter is directed to Cornelius by the same Spirit who is instructing the noble Roman when and how to find Peter. Cyrus and the Israelites were simultaneously stirred by the one Spirit to a common purpose,—to build the house of God. God never gave a Christian a message of salvation to a lost soul, without at the same time providing and preparing that lost soul to hear and be saved.

The proof of salvation is not always in the immediate acceptance of the Saviour. There are numberless instances where only anger and contempt have resulted at the time of the work. The proof is in the Holy Spirit and the truth. The Lord sent out seventy with definite instructions. So gracious was their preparation, so faithful their service, that they “returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.” The conquest of souls is possible to every and all Christians by the indwelling and power of the Holy Spirit and use of the truth through that name.

The Holy Spirit is promised to them who ask the Father, for he is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. The rain falls upon the just and upon the unjust but the precept and example of the Bible and church history teach us that the Holy Spirit is “given to them who ask.” The passion of Christ will never become the passion of the Christian unless the Holy Spirit begets it. Nor will he be able rightly to apply the Scriptures without the guidance thereof.

As we have shown, there is a double working of the Spirit, and he alone knows what passage of the Bible is needed in a particular case. If he dwell in the heart, he will send the point of the sword to the vital spot unerringly.

This indwelling of the Spirit also depends upon the state of the heart. Speaking after the manner of men, he is particular about his associates. A lover of money, or of pleasure, or position, or power, is not the choice of the Holy Spirit. Lovers of Jesus and his kingdom are the intimate friends of the Spirit. Such intimacy begets love of, and desire for, the things that the Spirit seeks. In other words, such love what God loves and hate what he hates.

Most physicians carry a case of remedies to be used in emergencies. Winning souls is ever an emergency. In the divine *materia medica* are certain remedies which every personal worker needs to carry. Having studied the heart, in order to know its ailments, the conscientious Christian will avail himself of those remedies. The eternal life of a soul may depend upon the practical knowledge one may have of the Bible. A knowledge of the history, biography, chronology, and doctrines of the Bible may be essential; yet well selected passages stored away in memory will become in the lips of the consecrated worker the needle-points of the Spirit. Science may strengthen the hilt of the gospel sword, poetry adorn it, philosophy aid in striking weightier blows; but forget not that it is the blade that brings the blood.

I have been astonished above measure at the power of a quotation from the Bible to silence the caviler, to encourage a timid inquirer, to send conviction to a hardened sinner, and to carry light into the soul of the anxious seeker. Whosoever comes to the study of God's word with a spirit of criticism, will find what he seeks. Higher and lower criticisms, conjectures and doubts, may satisfy the literary student of the Bible, but such will not be "the power of God unto salvation." God will not dishonor himself by using a mutilated truth. The whole—and a whole—counsel of God, must be declared, in order to succeed.

BE PRAYERFUL.

The last and always a requisite in "how to save souls," is prayer. However successfully one may prosecute other branches of Christian work without prayer, in this, he must if he wins, pray without ceasing. There may be exceptions, but I lay down as a rule in this regard that not many are saved who have not been personally prayed for. The working of the Holy Spirit in the unsaved soul is through the prayer of the soul winner. The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and also the lost. Persistent prayer, and that which springs from a soul in travail, will avail to the salvation of the lost. The widow's son is raised to life through the prayer of the prophet; Tabitha is restored to life through the prayer of Peter; by the prayers of his brethren he was released from prison; the word rooted in the heart of Lydia, by prayer, in connection with Paul's preaching; and the foundations of the prison were shaken, and the jailor convicted of his sins, because Paul and Silas held a prayer meeting in the prison stocks.

Why and how prayer touches the sources of the divine will, and causes it to co-operate with our weak strength, God has not revealed, but the Bible is replete with instances of its effectiveness. When we comprehend the scope of Christianity in its effect in man here, how it changes him into a "new creation," when the insistence of God is that this change is necessary here and now to salvation, and the lack of it dooms a man to eternal torment; when the sufferings of the Son of God in the garden and upon the cross are the divine illustration of the awfulness of that torment, shall we not, ought we not, must we not go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come "that their blood will not be required at our hands?" See Eze. 3: 18, 19

PERSONAL WORK IN REVIVALS.

REV. B. FAY MILLS.

It is very difficult to put on paper suggestions of value regarding personal intercourse with inquirers, and the best methods for bringing them to the light of God. There is no machinery and no lack of mechanical appliance, no form and no informality, that can, within itself, bring people into God's kingdom. The very best way to learn how to bring souls to Christ is to be earnestly engaged in endeavoring to do it. There is nothing in which practice makes perfect more than this.

The first necessity is that you should know your own salvation, not from having believed some statement in the Bible, but from having been so filled with the Spirit of Christ that his life will naturally flow from you to others. There is always power in the testimony of a man like Paul, who could hold up his shackled wrists before the proud king and say, "I would you were as I am."

In the second place, we need to be exceedingly gentle. Do not allow yourselves under any circumstances to scold an inquirer, or to argue with him in any harsh or vociferous way, but continually manifest the deepest tenderness and concern for his soul. Aim at the will. Never ask an inquirer what his difficulty is. The trouble with him is not that he cannot believe the story of Jonah, nor that he does not understand concerning some difference in the creeds of

the churches, but the only difficulty with him is sin and lack of submission to God.

There are four things to which he must be led if his salvation shall be complete. The first is the renunciation of every known sin. Never speak one word of peace to an inquirer until you are sure he is willing to give up every known sin. The second is the consecration of the neutral things and the good things to God. He must be willing to put at the disposal of God his time, money, influence, ambitions, pleasures, friends, etc. In the third place, he must see that he must depend entirely upon Christ for the cleansing of his heart and his preservation in the path of life. In the fourth place, he must be willing openly to confess Christ as his master. Never call the work done with any inquirer until these four things have been accomplished.

I should not advise you to pray with an inquirer until he was willing to pray for himself in token of submission of his will to God. It may be that at this very point will come the critical struggle in the surrender of his will. I should advise you, however, to be praying for him and yourself through every second of your conversation, and not to be in haste to say the first thing that may come to your lips, but to be waiting upon God for divine wisdom in all your utterances.

It is not generally well to talk to more than one inquirer at a time, and it is almost never well for more than one Christian to be talking with an inquirer. If, however, you find that you cannot accomplish the object that you have in view, do not hesitate to call others to your aid. But get some one in whom you have the greatest confidence, and then keep still and let this other one conduct the conversation. Never go and stand by the side of some one who is

conducting an interview with an inquirer in order to overhear the conversation. It is an exceedingly embarrassing thing for both the worker and the inquirer. If you fail to get the person to whom you are talking to surrender to God, and have to let him go, speak quietly and privately to some discreet person, and get him to see the individual, if possible, before he leaves the room, and see whether his added influence will not do what you seem to have failed to accomplish. I know of a man who one night was determined that he would not stay to an after-meeting, but who, after being addressed five different times on the subject, decided to remain to the after-service, and finally gave himself to God.

Always pray with the inquirer when you think that he is ready to submit to God, but be sure to get him to pray for himself. Never make a long prayer on such an occasion. Sometimes pause right in the middle of your prayer and ask him to pray a few words. If he hesitates, give him some appropriate words that he may repeat, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," "Lord, I do give myself to thee," "O Lord, forgive my sins, and help me to be a good Christian," or something of that sort.

Always have your Bible with you, and appeal to it for confirmation of your statements, but do not get the idea that the Bible will do the man any good so long as he is determined that he will not surrender to God. The great necessity is that he shall give up his will, and every man with whom you talk will know enough to do that without any lengthy commentaries upon what it means. Never make it unpleasant for the inquirer, or detain him against his will; but, on the other hand, never give him up while there seems to be any prospect of his yielding to God. Do not waste your time on those that seem so utterly hardened

as to be smilingly indifferent, unless you are sent to them by direct providential intervention.

When you have finished your interview with the inquirer, and have prayed with him, take pains to introduce him to other people ; if possible, to the pastor or some members of the church he prefers. If he be a young man, introduce him to the secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, if this is practicable. In many cases you will also find it exceedingly helpful to follow up the inquirers yourself by calling on them the next day for a few moments at their homes or places of business, and saying an encouraging word to them. I believe that every one of us may win precious souls to Christ, who shall shine as bright stars in our crown of rejoicing.

EXPECTING CONVERSIONS.

IRA D. SANKEY.

I BELIEVE that if the members expect conversions in the church and through the church ordinances, there will be interest all the time. But if they have made up their minds there will be no conversions, and in fact reject the whole question almost of conversions, I believe there will be death reigning through the church in every department. I know of nothing in the world that will awaken an interest so much as to know somebody is being converted in the church. You may talk about getting up an interest, about music, and everything else, but it don't have half as much power as for the people to know that in that church there has been a poor soul brought to Christ. A few faithful ones in the prayer meeting, in the church, in the Sabbath-school, working for the conversion of sinners,—that is what will wake a church up. We never had any interest in our meetings until we commenced to work for the conversion of souls. That is the only thing that will satisfy. All the rest, more or less, is machinery. But if we are expecting it, and the minister is expecting there will be conversions at every meeting, I tell you there will be great interest.

Over across the water, a man was once walking through one of the large church cathedrals there. He was a stranger in the country. A man was showing him the wonderful

building, the beautiful windows and statuary, and all that, and this man, in the kindness and simplicity of his heart, said: "Well, have you many conversions here?" The man turned upon him and said: "Conversions, conversions! why, my friend, what kind of place do you think this is? Do you take this to be a Wesleyan chapel?" The idea of a conversion in that great church was so foreign to his idea of things, it was preposterous for a man to talk of conversions in that church. Is it not so with some of our churches on this side of the water? If you go and ask them if they have had any conversions in the past week or the past month, they would say, "Conversions!" My friend, if you fail at that you fail at everything, because it is the building up, the foundation of the church.

I believe that minister who has the men and women in the church at work is the most successful. I know that in some churches that I need not mention, the work is not all done by the minister. Some of the best ministers in the world fail to interest their own members. I know when I came into the church I was given something to do, and I thank God for it. When the new converts come into the prayer meetings, do not discourage their taking part. Don't tell them not to speak or do anything.

I remember a man once told Mr. Moody that he could serve the Lord better by keeping still in the prayer meeting; but you know whether he has kept still or not. He, perhaps, did not make just as good a speech as the pastor but he has been getting along ever since.

DEFECTIVE REVIVAL WORK.

FROM THE INDEPENDENT.

THE results from special services, while in many cases very blessed, are in many more disappointing. The disappointment is the result of several defects in our thought and plan of work.

First: It is a mistake to suppose that aggressive spiritual work can be successfully accomplished by setting apart a few weeks in the year for it, without the most careful preparation for it during the rest of the time. Yet this is largely the habit. For months there is no preparatory work done. People are not visited with a view to the work of God in the conversion of their souls. Pastoral visitation, if not wholly formal, is for the most part religiously social and observed more with a view to keeping up personal relation and communication between pastor and people, than for immediate and direct spiritual work. It is seldom the case that in any church there is to be found a regular and systematic care of the flock, which leads the church to be on the look-out for the spiritual defection and immediate rescue of those who are in danger of being enticed away from God by natural weakness of the flesh or the direct allurements of the world and the devil. It is the fashion to let things go by the sun until such time as it seems good to the church to "begin a series of meetings." These meetings may last for a month or six weeks at long-

est, and what is recovered and gathered in during that time, is thankfully received, and the aggressive work is suspended. By degrees the church falls back into the normal condition of spiritual inactivity; some of the converts fall away, and the most that is done, is for some one to remark that he never thought "they would hold out." There is little effort at restoring such a one in love.

The fact is, if special seasons of revival are to be greatly blessed, there must be much work before, and much work after, the meetings. In the coldest season when frost and snow have bound up and covered the earth, the prudent farmer is engaged in selecting his corn-seed; his machinery and farm implements are looked over and put in order; and everything is gotten in readiness for the first soft day in spring that announces that the frost is out of the ground and it is ready for the plow. The intensely active work is confined to a few months or weeks of the year; but then, the whole year besides is spent either in preparation for the harvest, or in gathering and threshing it. God's husbandry needs similar forethought and careful preparation. There are few churches that are ready for special evangelistic services when they are appointed and begun; and the result is that the fruit is meager or weakly come by, just as a harvest hastily planted and poorly cultivated is never a good harvest. It is apparent in churches as it is in the farms of two farmers where the farm of one man betokens what we call "careful farming," while that of the other is characterized by "careless farming." This is our greatest mistake,—lack of careful, forehanded, all-the-year-round preparation for special efforts.

Second: Too much stress is laid upon the conversion of sinners. We speak in view of the generally unready condition of the church. The burden of desire seems to be

to "see souls saved." Far be it from us to say that such a desire is not lawful; but our impression is, that special effort is too quickly directed to this work of "soul saving" in the average so-called revival meetings. The church needs, for the most part, a thorough awakening to its own spiritual condition. In fact, there must be a revival of religion in the church, before there can be a reasonable hope of an ingathering of souls from the world. It is a mistake to suppose that God can or will work through a cold, unconsecrated, and worldly church. It is very difficult for the minister or the evangelist to reach sinners over the heads and through the hearts of a cold and unsympathetic church; and in case sinners are convicted and converted, it is equally difficult to drag them into the kingdom over the heads and through the cold hearts of unsympathetic church-members. It is an egregious blunder to suppose that any pastor or evangelist can accomplish a revival of religion without the spiritual sympathy and co-operation of the people of God with whom he works.

After all, our mature conviction is that the *church* and not the *evangelist* is the important factor in revival work. Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost would have had little effect on the multitude but for the fact that the whole company had been for ten days waiting on the Lord, and "were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Neither pastor nor evangelist may work successfully through a church to reach the unconverted unless there is spiritual power in the church. A spiritual evangelist might, and probably would see great results from his work in some hall or rink apart from the church, and in spite of the church, where there was nothing between him and sinners but the word of God; but the minute he enters a church, then the church stands between his message and the unsaved. If the church is in

quick sympathy, and acts as a transmitter of the word, by spiritual power, then the preacher is strong and more than effective ; but if, on the other hand, the church is cold, critical, and unsympathetic, it acts as a non-conducting power; and though the *word* may be in power, it is lost through the active resistance or passive inertia of the church through which it must pass before it gets to the unsaved people.

Depend upon it, if we are to see hereafter thorough revivals of religion, we must direct our attention to the church, and endeavor to secure a proper spiritual condition there. We would not say that special meetings ought not to be held with the churches until they are in proper spiritual condition ; but we would, if special meetings are to be held, begin at the “house of God” with the word, and purge out the “old leaven” and burn out the “wood, hay, and stubble.” God knows the churches need, in many cases, to be converted to a consecrated Christian life, as much as the sinners in the world need to be converted to Christ. When the former condition is seen in the churches, then will the latter result come about among the unsaved.

THE SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE.

REV. ADDISON P. FOSTER, D. D.

IN multitudes of churches throughout the land the Sunday evening preaching service is thinly attended, or abandoned altogether. Can anything be done to prevent such a waste of opportunities for good? An experience of over seven years with a service at which, through all that time, a church seating over one thousand, was nearly always filled on Sunday evening with a throng of decorous and worshipful young people, assures me that it can.

The Sunday evening service can be made the largest and most effective service of the Sabbath. It can be enthusiastically sustained, year in and year out, and be made a most powerful instrumentality in reaching the community and building up the church. This can be done by modifying the formal service commonly in vogue to-day, and turning it into a joyous, tender, and off-hand "people's gospel service."

It is not enough to preach an elaborate sermon, such as is usual to the morning. Regular church-goers say, with much truth, that they do not need a second sermon of that sort. At any rate, they will not come to hear it. Nor will it answer to preach sensational sermons or essays on the labor question, and like themes, distantly related to the gospel. Sensations soon wear out, and are unhealthy at best. Discussions on political economy and social science

do not feed the soul, and will not draw the multitudes to the house of God.

The evening service should be distinctively shaped and used to reach the non-church-going classes. The church exists to convert the world. It is set in a community to win it to Christ. To this end it is bound to utilize at least one of its services—and the evening is the best adapted to the purpose—for earnest, aggressive, evangelistic effort for those not in the habit of going to church. Their tastes and needs must control everything about the service. The pews must be free; the tastes of the regular congregation, in regard to the style and matter, both of the preaching and music, must be sacrificed. All classes and conditions must be cordially welcomed, and everything done to make the stranger and the poor feel at home. The church may properly enough use its morning service for inspiration; its second, or Bible service, for instruction; but the day should culminate in interest and importance with a service of aggression.

The first part of the service should be chiefly music. This may be legitimately used to draw to the house of God, people not in the habit of coming. They do not at the first care for preaching. They do not yet know how much they need the gospel, and how glad they will be when they get it. But they do know what good music is. It delights them; it stirs their emotions; it speaks to them in a language they understand; it may be so wisely rendered as to bring men to church Sabbath after Sabbath, and at the same time waken in them spiritual longings, and prepare the way for the story of the cross.

The music of this service should be varied; for all classes of people are to be reached. Its basis should be congregational singing, with popular music, like that of the

“Gospel Hymns.” But this is not enough for most communities. Some classical music should be given for the many of artistic taste. A quartette is desirable to render this. And, above all, a large volunteer choir of young people, who will sing for the love of souls, is necessary.

The second part of the service is the sermon. This should be designed to produce conviction. It should be plain, honest, and intensely earnest. The people are hungry for a pure gospel. Once give them a good taste of it, and they find it is what they want. The sermon must be free from cant; must avoid dullness as a sin; must go straight to the point in a business-like fashion; must stop when the thing is said; and must be brief — not ordinarily over twenty-five or thirty minutes in length. It is best delivered without the use of notes, in a conversational way, and with no pulpit barricade between the speaker and his audience.

The third, the culminating, and perhaps most essential part of the people’s gospel service, is the after-meeting. This falls to the church to care for, and is that part of the service specially adapted to secure conviction. It is best sustained where there is a large chapel or vestry at the rear or side of the audience room, or underneath it, into which the congregation can naturally flow when the main service is ended. If there be no such room, the meeting may be held, though less advantageously, in the body of the house. It is well to have a few singers stationed in the room appropriated to the after-meeting, just before the close of the main service, who shall start some spirited hymn just as the people are dismissed, and so draw them in.

The after-meeting is to clinch the nail of divine truth that may have been driven in the preceding service. It is to emphasize the truth of the sermon by the testimony of

the church. It is above all, to furnish opportunity for any who may have been touched by the service to give expression to their feelings, and to take a stand for Christ. In this after-meeting everything should be brief and pointed. It should not continue more than fifteen or twenty minutes. There must not be a pause, nor anything prosy or profound. The meeting must be marked by the utmost simplicity and tenderness. As a rule, it is desirable that an opportunity be given before the close of the meeting, for any who wish, to rise for prayers, or to indicate their desire for Christ.

The people's gospel service, as thus described, has been for nearly seven years in operation at the tabernacle in Jersey City. It has seemingly solved for that church, as it apparently may for every "down town" church, the problem of its existence. It has increased the attendance at the evening service from 100 to 1000. It has nearly trebled the number of families in the parish. It has led to constant accessions to the church, and one powerful revival, so that its membership has nearly doubled. It has brought into active and self-denying co-operation for the work of the church and the support of the gospel, a multitude of those in moderate circumstances, who, but for the evening service, would probably never have cared for Christian truth.

THE INQUIRY MEETING.

D. L. MOODY.

I THINK there ought to be three kinds of services in all the churches. One service is just to worship,—to offer praise, and to wait on the Lord in prayer,—another service for teaching. The great lack of this country is teaching. At this kind of service there need not be a word to the unconverted, but let it be for the church people. We want to get the church up on a higher plane. Let there be teaching out of the Scriptures, and the church will grow. Sunday morning is the best time for teaching. Sunday night is the best time in the whole week to preach the simple gospel of the Son of God. When you have preached that, and felt the power of the unseen world, and there are souls trembling in the balance, don't say, as I have heard good ministers say, "*If* there are any in this place concerned—at all concerned—about their souls, I will be in the pastor's study on Friday night, and will be glad to see them." By that time, the chances are, the impressions will be all wiped out. The devil will snatch away the seed. How is it at most of our evening services? The minister preaches the gospel with great effect; then he pronounces the benediction; the music strikes up and the golden opportunity is lost.

When you give the invitation, be careful how you do it. After you have preached twenty or thirty minutes,—and

here let me say it is a good thing to stop before the people think it is time to close, because then they are willing to stay longer and they are not worn out,—after a short sermon I would say : “ If any one has got to go, will you please rise and go, while we sing this familiar hymn ? ” Put the “ if ” in the right place. A few will drop out. You will have nearly the whole audience left. Then I would give the notice a second time : “ If there is any one that has got to go, will you go while we are singing this hymn, and so not disturb us in the after-meeting ? There are two classes we want to remain. We want the Christians who are willing to talk to these unsaved ones. And then, if there is any one that has the least desire to become a Christian, we want you to remain.” Sing a little. Have one or two prayers—special prayers for those there present. Pass among the people, and if it is your own congregation, say : “ Brother Brown, won’t you speak to this man ? ” “ Brother Jones, want you speak to that man ? ” That’ll wake up your church more than anything else ; and you can keep it going fifty-two Sundays a year. I do think it is a great mistake to give up the Sunday night service for anything that comes along. I would hold that night just sacred to preaching the gospel.

If you have not had power, don’t hold this kind of an after-meeting. Ask the Christians to remain. It is a great set-back to ask people to go into an inquiry meeting, and not one go. There are four classes of inquirers. The first, and I think the most important class to be labored with, are *Christians who are still in bondage*—who have no liberty. The First Epistle of John was written on purpose to help this class.

The next class are *backsliders*. Find the second chapter of Jeremiah, fifth verse, and read it to the backslider:

"Thus saith the Lord, what iniquity have your fathers found in me that they are gone far from me?" See how the Lord pleads with backsliders to return in the third chapter, twelfth and thirteenth verses: "Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord."

The third class are those *slightly convicted*. They must not be dealt with like those bowed down under the burden of sin. Don't offer healing until the wound is made. Read to such a one from the third of Romans: "There is none righteous, no, not one;" and from the first chapter of Isaiah: "From the sole of the foot even to the crown of the head there is no soundness in it." And bring in that verse: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." And First John, tenth verse: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us," and hold him right to it.

The fourth class are the *deeply convicted*. The devil has two ways of dealing with people. He tries as long as he can to keep their eyes off their own hearts, chiefly by setting them to watch their neighbors. And when that fails he says: "O, you are so bad the Lord won't have you anyway." Read Isa. 1: 18; 43: 25; 44: 22. In John 1: 11, 12 we learn that the way to peace with God is to receive Jesus Christ. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." If the inquirer asks, "How can I be sure all these promises are mine?" read John 3: 16 and John 5: 24. Always use your Bible when referring to the texts. Let the inquirer put his finger on the chapter and verse. Honor the word.

HELPFUL PASSAGES FOR DIFFERENT CLASSES OF SEEKERS.

FOR BACKSLIDERS.—Jer. 2:19; 3:13, 14; Hosea 14:4.

FOR THOSE SLIGHTLY CONVICTED.—Rom. 3:10–23; 8:24; 1 John 1:10; Eccel. 7:20; Isa. 53:6; Ps. 143:2; Acts 13:39; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8, 9.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE TOO GREAT SINNERS.—Isa. 1:18; 43:25; 44:22; Rom. 5:6; 1 Peter 2:24; Rev. 22:17.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE AFRAID THEY WILL NOT HOLD OUT.—1 Peter 4:19; Ps. 121:1; Isa. 43:2; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 12:9; Rom. 8:38, 39.

FOR THOSE WHO STUMBLE AT INCONSISTENT CHRISTIANS.—Rom. 14:12; John 21:21, 22; Matt. 7:1–3; Rom. 4:5.

FOR THOSE WHO WAIT A MORE CONVENIENT SEASON.—Prov. 27:1; James 4:13, 14; 2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:13.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE TOO MANY THINGS TO GIVE UP.—Mark 8:35–37; Phil. 3:7, 8.

FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO KNOW HOW TO BELIEVE.—John 5:24. It is to *receive*. John 1:11, 12, It is to *trust*. Isa. 26:3, 4. It is to *take*. Rev. 22:17.

RESULTS OF BELIEVING.—Joy (John 15:11); rest (Matt. 11:28, 29); peace (John 14:27). Inquirers who have believed are sometimes in darkness because they have not confessed. Rom. 10:10.

FOR SKEPTICAL INQUIRERS.—John 6:40; Ps. 25:14; John 7:17.

PART II.

OUTLINES AND SKETCHES OF REVIVAL
SERMONS.

THE PRAYER OF NEHEMIAH.

Nehemiah 1: 4-11.

NEHEMIAH was not a Jewish prince, although it is supposed he had royal blood in his veins. He was born in captivity. It was about one hundred years after Jerusalem was taken that this man became prominent in sacred history. He was in the court of Artaxerxes. He was a cup-bearer to the king, and held a high position. I can imagine that one day in the court he met a man that had come down from Jerusalem, perhaps on business for the king, and he got into conversation with him. In fact, it may be this very man wanted Nehemiah to use his influence with the king. Nehemiah began to inquire about Jerusalem and the condition of his own people, and he was told they were in great want, and distress, and degradation, and that the walls of the city were still down, that the gates had been burned and never restored, and his patriotic heart began to burn. He began to mourn for his own country, to pray and fast, and I have no doubt but that when he commenced to pray, he asked that the king might be sent to rebuild the walls. He, perhaps, didn't have any thought of doing anything more than to pray. But if you can get a man to pray, he will soon be prepared to do something more.

Nehemiah didn't pray for one week, nor two, nor even a month, but he kept at it. Perhaps he fasted two or three days in a week and kept that up all through the fall. He persevered. He prayed on and fasted on, and all this while God was answering his prayer. Although he didn't

see any answer, God was just preparing that king to have everything in readiness when the time should come. And one day he stood before the king as usual and gave him a cup of wine. The king looked up and said, "Nehemiah, why art thou sad? Are you sick?" Nehemiah answered, "No." "Well, what is the trouble? It must be sorrow of heart." Then Nehemiah told the king how he was burdened for his own country, and the king said, "Well, what is your request?" But Nehemiah had time to pray right then and there. The king didn't hear the prayer but the King of kings heard it. "Lord help me now," he prayed to the God of heaven. Men say they have not time to pray, but Nehemiah prayed while the king was waiting for an answer. The Lord taught him just what to ask for, and then he made his request. It wasn't that the king of Persia might go and rebuild those walls, but that he himself might be sent to do the work. There is faith for you! He was dead in earnest. For three or four months he had concentrated his mind upon the misery and wretchedness of his country.

To give up that Persian court to identify himself with those despised Jews! He was among the highest of all the whole realm, cupbearer to the king, and held a high position. And not only that, he was a man of great wealth, lived in great luxury, and was a man of great influence in that court; and for him to go up to Jerusalem and lose caste was like Moses turning his back upon the court and identifying himself with those poor captives. He stooped to conquer; and when you get ready to stoop, God will use you. If we are going to succeed in God's work, we must stoop.

Nehemiah found favor with the king. The king was all ready to give him his request, and he gave orders that

Nehemiah should have a retinue of soldiers to escort him through the different provinces. Jerusalem was one thousand miles away. He knew how he would be persecuted and looked down upon, but he had made up his mind to rebuild those walls. I tell you it is a great thing for a man to set something before him and go and do it. "This one thing I do," says Nehemiah, "I will rebuild that wall." And he went. When he reached Jerusalem, he did n't have some one go before him and blow a horn and say, "This is the great Nehemiah, the cup-bearer to the great king of Persia." He did n't tell any one what his business was. Man, let the work speak for itself. You need n't blow any horns ; go and do the work and it will advertise itself. I am tired of these men who are always going to do some great thing.

This man went into Jerusalem and did n't tell what he had come for. There was quite a stir. What had he come for? Was it war or was it peace? What had brought him here? What did it all mean? But Nehemiah stayed there three days and three nights and did n't let even his own men know what he had come for. One night after they had all gone to bed and all was quiet, he stole out on his beast and tried to ride around on the walls, but he could n't get round on his beast so he went on foot. He walked all around those walls, examining them, and found them all in ruins. His heart would have sunk within him if it had not been a brave one. The nations all around were looking down upon these weak feeble Jews. So it is to-day ; the walls are down, and people say it is no use, and their hands drop down by their sides. After he had been there three days and nights he called the chief priests and elders and the Pharisees together and told them what his errand was. All this while God had been working in

the hearts of his men so that they were now ready. When he had finished his speech, they arose and said, "Let us rebuild the city." If we could have such men here in Providence, wouldn't we see the walls of Jerusalem going up?

But it wasn't long before there was a muttering outside; you could hear the rumbling. I want to tell you, my friends, that there was never any work done for God without opposition. A great many people are afraid of opposition. That is just what we want. If it is real work, there is going to be opposition. Sanballat and Tobiah, the Ammonites, the Geshemites, and all the people round heard of it, and they began at the first to ridicule. It will be so right here in Providence. People will begin to ridicule and heap all manner of criticism upon the work. So these men went on ridiculing and jeering at Nehemiah, but he was too busy to stop and listen to them. I pity these men that will stop to answer all this caviling. Let them go on grumbling and caviling. Nehemiah kept steady at work. Well, they found that ridicule didn't work, so they sent him a letter: "Let's go down to the plains of Ono and have a council." They wanted to get him down to the plains to consult with him and have a friendly conversation. What is the church of God doing now but having discussions upon the plains of Ono? Look at the whole Presbyterian Church, turned aside discussing higher criticism! Nehemiah just sent back word, "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down." He thought it was "coming down." I think so too. Let the discussions go. Man, we have all eternity to discuss these questions. There is too much work to be done now to stop to discuss them. Well, they wrote him another letter: "Come down to the plains of Ono, we want to have a friendly discussion; we are your friends." By

this time the Arabs came along, those roaming Ishmaelites were going to fight him. But Nehemiah and his men just put on their swords. They were in dead earnest. "Watch, fight, pray." They watched. O, it is a wily devil that we have to contend with. Do you know it? If he can only get the church to stop to discuss these questions, he has accomplished his desire.

Now, perhaps you women who belong to the Women's Christian Temperance Union may feel hurt, but I do think it is a masterstroke of the devil when he gets you to stop to discuss women's rights. "Haste to the rescue! We are doing a great work, and have n't time to come down." I tell you the prohibition I believe in is to get the people so they won't want to go into the rum shops. That is the quickest way to do it; cut the business off, and away it goes! Why, there is one town in Scotland where Mr. Sankey and myself went; there was a great work of God going on, and the people were all converted. There were two rum shops there, and they could n't sell any whisky and had to move away. If those men on the plains of Ono had gone on discussing, there would have been nothing done. But Nehemiah kept steadily at work. No eight hours a day, either. They commenced at starlight in the morning and worked until starlight.

I tell you the man that is counting the hours he works for the Lord, does n't amount to much. They could n't get Nehemiah down to the plains, so they sent him a fifth letter—what we to-day call an open letter: "We understand it is reported that you are going to get up a kingdom against the king of Persia. This is treason, rebellion, and if it should reach the ears of the king, you would be put to death. So come down, and let's have a friendly counsel." But Nehemiah said, "I am doing a

great work, and I cannot come down." That was all he had to say. And when they found they couldn't get him to come down, and the walls were about finished, they went to work and bought one of the prophets. I tell you I had rather have 10,000 enemies outside than one inside. When the devil gets possession of a child of God, he will do the work better than the devil himself. "Now, Nehemiah, there is a plan to kill you, come into the temple. Let's go in and stay for the night." And he came very near tumbling into that pit. He said, "Should such a man as I go there to save my life? I cannot do it." He couldn't come down, you see; and when he refused, it was revealed to him that the devil was in the man. My friends, look out. If even a minister asks you to do something against that word, don't you do it. Never mind these outside or inside enemies, but keep your face set on the walls of Jerusalem.

At last the walls were all finished—all built. Those men were terribly in earnest. They didn't take their clothes off. They went in to build the walls of Jerusalem, and I tell you what, they will be rebuilt here if we can only get a few hundred people in earnest. Never mind what those enemies may say. He has a work for us to do, and if we don't do it, it will not be done. It is a false idea some people have that if we don't do it, somebody else will. I tell you what, it won't take long to rebuild the walls here, when the city moves as Nehemiah and his men moved. Fifty-two days and the building was finished. And there was great indignation. And then he went to work and put the city in order. I tell you what, I wish we had Nehemiah for mayor in New York. He just made those men sign a covenant, and there were five things in that covenant that he made them sign.

First, they were not to give their daughters to the heathen. I haven't time to work this up ; but do you know how much misery there is and has been in our land, because pure, Christian young woman have been married to non-Christian men ? God says, " Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

The next thing they were to do was not to buy or sell on the Sabbath. They were to keep the law of God ; they were to keep the Sabbath. Not sell the Sunday paper ? Not buy a Sunday paper ? Yes, they were not to buy the Sunday *Sun*, nor the *Herald*, nor even the *World*. There was to be no traffic on the Sabbath. If Nehemiah was here, he would find a good many of us like Tobiah. Here we have boys who are kept away from the Sunday-school to sell papers on the streets — trains running clear from Washington in order that the papers can be sold. A young man that reads one of those papers you cannot get into church. He is all taken up with the things of the world. We need a Nehemiah to strengthen us. " We will not buy on the Sabbath ;" and he had the gates closed.

Then the third thing he made them sign was that they would let the land rest every seventh year. For 490 years they did not keep that agreement, and God took them down into Babylon and kept them there for seventy years. Seventy times seven is four hundred and ninety. They would not let the land rest, and so God took it from them. A man says that he will not give God one day out of seven. What is the result ?— Why, God takes it. A man is not going to make anything by working seven days in a week. You cannot rob God. So they signed the covenant that they would let the land rest. You know that with the Jews everything revolved around seven. There was a seventh day for rest, and seven times seven brought the year of Jubilee.

The next thing in that covenant was that they should not take usury from their brother. Nehemiah would have a time of it in New York, wouldn't he?— Yes, he would ! But Nehemiah made those men sign it.

The fifth thing was that they would bring one tenth of all they had into the Lord's storehouse. The first of their fruits was to be brought to the Lord, and for thirty-six years they had prosperity.

I tell you, if you take these five things and carry them out, you will have prosperity. Let us all do it personally. If it was good for those men, it is good for us. The moment we begin to rob God, then darkness and misery and wretchedness will come.

D. L. MOODY.

WINNING SOULS.

“He must needs go through Samaria.” John 4 : 4.

THERE are different ways of reading the Bible. We may read it for its history ; for its doctrines and ethics, or for its spiritual effects on the soul. So there are different ways of reading this text. Looking at it geographically, we may say, “He must needs go through Samaria ” because Samaria lay between Judea and Galilee. But the fact is there was no such necessity, since the Jews very seldom passed through that section of the land, but went around it.

The woman told our Saviour that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. To understand this feeling of bitterness you must remember two things : (1) Who the Samaritans were ; (2) What the quarrel was about. The

Jews had their temple ; the Samaritans had theirs. The Samaritans did all they could to hinder the Jews from going up to Jerusalem to worship. They would not let Christ and his disciples stop over night in one of their villages, because " his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem." On the other hand, a Jew would not grasp a staff that a Samaritan had touched. He would not sit on a seat, however tired he might be, that a Samaritan had used. He would not eat with one. When he prayed that he might enter paradise, he prayed that no Samaritan might be there. When they wished to say the most dreadful thing to Christ, they said, " Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil."

" He must needs go through Samaria " to save a soul — to save one soul. We like to save souls wholesale. But as a rule, men are saved one by one.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the priest I suppose was in a hurry — he was on his way, probably, to attend a convention at Jerusalem to consider the question, "*How to reach the masses.*"

But perhaps you exclaim: "Yes, but there was something special about this woman; she was more deserving than most persons." There was nothing of the kind. We are anxious for the young ruler, but not for the poor outcast. Her heart was hard; her mind was dark; her soul was guilty. Wesley said: "Go not to those who need you, but to those who need you most."

We have here a great lesson on how to win souls. "He must needs go through Samaria" to teach us how to do this. Let us study our Lord's method of dealing with this case.

1. *And First of all He went to Meet the Woman.* — His desire for souls did not end in mere desire; no nor even in prayer for them. He went through Samaria for that poor,

lost woman. He was at the well before the woman arrived there. Christ is always first. He does not keep us waiting. How long He has been waiting for some of you !

2. *His Next Step was to Remove Obstacles.*—What were they ?—The disciples. He sent them away. If your friend is ill, and desires to see some Christian friend, leave them alone together. Remember, too, that God is a God of providence. This woman's cistern was dry and she had to go a long distance to the well. The miserable wretch she lives with is not her husband, and what does he care how hard she toils ? Poor sinful woman ! I wonder if she did not often wish she were dead ? But there was a providence over her that day ; it brought her to Jesus.

3. *He Removed her Prejudices.*—The woman was ready for argument. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." "Our Fathers worshiped in this mountain, but ye say that in Jerusalem is the place," etc. You will never convert men by arguing with them. Don't argue.

How did Christ proceed ? He knew that after all she was a woman, and that woman was made to be a ministering angel, and so he said, "Give me a drink." There is a good deal of talk about the equality of the sexes. If I were a woman, I would resent that. Women are nearer angels than men. That simple request has disarmed her.

4. *He Arrests her Attention.*—"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is," etc. She is all interest in a moment. "The well is deep, . . . art thou greater than our father Jacob," etc. She wonders who this stranger is.

5. *He Arouses her Conscience.*—"Go, call thy husband." That is a flash from the Judgment Throne. She answers, "I have no husband," which is only a half truth ; but Christ knew her altogether. "Thou hast well said, for thou hast had five husbands." Perhaps no other living

creature knew that — Christ did. She trembles from head to foot ; she sees that he can read her very heart. “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Where ought men to worship ? ”

He has removed her prejudices ; he has arrested her attention ; he has aroused her conscience. What next ?

6. *He Reveals Himself.*—She says, “When Messiah cometh, he will tell us all things.” Then Christ revealed himself ; and told that poor sinful woman what he had not as yet told even to his disciples : “I that speak unto thee am he.” And O, with what joy she received the revelation ! What was her first thought ? her first impulse ?—To go and tell others. O, may God teach us how to win souls.

CHARLES GARRETT.

REVIVALS—THEIR NECESSITY.

“O Lord, revive thy work.” *Hab. 3 : 2.*

I. IN WHAT DOES A REVIVAL CONSIST ?

1. In quickening believers to a higher life.
2. In awakening the church to her divinely appointed mission. The church has been organized for the great work of saving souls. A church often forgets this and acts as though her mission was to please and entertain the world. A true revival always corrects this.
3. In leading sinners to Christ.

II. THERE IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR REVIVALS.

1. Nothing does more good to the church than revivals. They heal breaches and restore harmony.

2. They call out all the strength of the church. In times of revival there are no drones in the church ; she is "like an army with banners."

3. The existence of the church depends on revivals. If there were no more children born into the world, the world would soon come to an end; so churches must perish without converts.

4. Revivals are necessary because of their influence on the wicked. A real revival brings out the character of the wicked; they yield or rebel.

5. Because of their influence on communities. In 1842, during the great revival in Boston, theaters and saloons were closed, and the churches were all filled. During the great revival in Ireland, the sale of strong drink was greatly diminished, and the number of criminals decreased.

III. HOW MAY REVIVALS BE SECURED ?

1. By the study of God's word.
 2. By self-examination and forsaking of sin.
 3. By meditating much on the condition of the unsaved.
 4. By united and persevering prayer.
 5. By the faithful preaching of the gospel.
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REVIVALS—WHEN NEEDED AND HOW PRODUCED.

"O Lord, revive thy work." Hab. 3 : 2.

"THE Son of Man" walketh as the great Head of the church, "in the midst of the golden candlesticks." Rev. 1·12-16.

He looks upon the work of his own hands, and too often beholds it drooping, declining, dying. He utters his rebuke: "I know thy works. . . . Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die." Rev. 3: 1, 2.

His church owns the charge, and cries, "O Lord, revive thy work!"

I. WHEN DOES THE WORK OF THE LORD NEED REVIVING?

1. When iniquity abounds. Isa. 59: 1–15; Jer. 5; 23: 10, etc.
2. Where there is want of power upon the word. Isa. 64: 7; Matt. 13: 14, 15.
3. When there is a want of appetite for the sincere milk of the word. Num. 21: 5; 2 Tim. 4: 3.
4. When the Saviour's presence in the soul is not duly prized. Cant. 3: 1; 5: 2, 3.
5. When there is want of concern for the honor of God. Haggai 1: 1–9.
6. When the principles and conduct of Christians are not distinctly separate from the world. 2 Chron. 18: 1; 19: 2; Ezra 9: 2.

II. HOW DOES THE LORD REVIVE HIS WORK?

1. By exciting his people to pray. Ps. 80; 85: 4–7; Isa. 63: 17; Zech. 8: 21; Acts 1: 14; 2: 1.
2. By invigorating their graces. Hosea 14: 5–7.
3. By sending an increased power upon the word. Acts 2: 41–47; 5: 13, 14; 6: 7; 11: 21, 24.
4. By causing a steadfast adherence to the means of grace. Neh. 9: 3; Luke 24: 53; Acts 2: 46.

5. By a distinct separation of his people from the company and principles of the ungodly. Neh. 9: 2; Acts 2: 40; 2 Cor. 6: 14-18.
6. By pouring out a spirit of love and unity upon his church. Isa. 11: 6-9; Acts 2: 44, 45; 4: 32.
7. By enlarging the enjoyment of Christian privileges. Acts 9: 31.
8. By restoring those that have erred in doctrine or practice, to the simplicity of the gospel. Isa. 29: 24.

Let us learn the importance of earnest, individual, and united prayer for the outpouring of that gracious Spirit, who is the Almighty Agent of the revival of the Lord's work in his church. Isa. 64. 1-3.

C. BRIDGES.

CONDITIONS OF A REVIVAL.

"Prove me now." Mal. 3: 10.

THE greatest blessing ever bestowed on any place is a genuine revival of religion. God is always on the giving hand, and he challenges us to "prove him" by fulfilling the appointed conditions.

The promised results uniformly follow the use of the appointed means.

What are these conditions and means?

1. We must humble ourselves before God, confess our weakness and nothingness and give him all the glory. His strength operates through voluntary weakness. We can do nothing without him, but all things through him.

“Oh, to be nothing, nothing,
Only to lie at his feet.”

2 Chron. 7 : 14 ; James 4 : 6-10.

2. We must examine and judge ourselves and put away all known sin. If we cherish or practice sin, God will not hear us and the world will not be influenced by us. We must be “living epistles” of first imprint, and walking Bibles. The best evidence of Christianity is a Christian. We must be separated, consecrated and concentrated. James 5 : 16 ; Ps. 51 : 12, 13.

3. We must have unreserved self-surrender and dedication to God that he may fill and consecrate us to the work. All has been redeemed, soul, body, property, time, etc., and all must be dedicated to the Master’s use without reserve and at any cost, and as really as if by a quitclaim deed, so that we are only stewards and not proprietors. We see the power of consecration in Abraham and the weakness of conformity in Lot. Calvin’s seal was an extended hand with a burning heart, and the inscription, “I give thee all, I keep back nothing !” Thus if we would have the unspeakable blessings of a revival, let us say sincerely,

“My all is on the altar laid,
And waiting for the fire.”

Rom. 12 : 1 ; 1 Cor. 6 : 19, 20.

4. We must have absolute faith in the promises of God concerning a revival. Without profound convictions we cannot please God, and God cannot use us. Faith is the mother grace of all others. The measure of faith must be the measure of blessing. If we can believe, God can do. Read the multitude of promises. Heb. 11 : 6 ; Mark 9 : 22, 23.

5. Reconciliation with brethren. The Spirit flies from scenes of discord and strife. Self-will, testiness, and ill feeling must go and we must be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving, and we must come back into close fellowship with Christ and our brethren. We should have momentum enough not to be veered by every breath of criticism, and step high enough not to stumble at a straw. An idle, lazy dog wants to be noticed and petted, but a dog that is after a fox cares nothing about such things. All shake hands and then go to work. Matt. 5: 23, 24; Ps. 133.

6. Diligent and prayerful study of the word, so as to know how to use this "sword of the Spirit." Revivals will be shallow and transient without the wise and liberal use of the word. The Spirit is the agent and the word the instrument. We must rightly divide the word. Our work in a revival without the word will only make a bonfire of wood, hay, and stubble. John 5: 39; Ps. 119: 37.

7. Compassionate anxiety for sinners, and sighing and crying for surrounding abominations. We find in every place about as many anxious sinners as anxious saints. No weeping, no reaping. Woe to them that are at ease. Zion must travail if souls are born. Moses, David, and Paul had so much of the spirit of Christ that they would have died for sinners. We must "put ourselves in their place" and act accordingly in love for their souls. How must Christ and angels view —

"A church asleep,
With dying sinners in her arms?"

Eze. 9: 4; Luke 19: 41.

8. Effectual, fervent prayer, especially for the Holy Spirit. Genuine revivals are born in prayer. Pentecost was the result of a ten days' prayer meeting. In 1857

the greatest revival of the last half century was largely a prayer meeting revival. Volumes are filled with the wonders wrought by prayer. Mr. Finney at one time had a man with him who did not attend the meetings, but only kept his room and prayed. And fasting should accompany prayer. Acts 1 : 8; Acts 4 : 31.

9. Preaching, testifying, and exhorting in the Spirit, and with definite purpose of winning souls to Christ. Preaching is the royal ordinance, and let it be done with the "tongue of fire" to arouse both saints and sinners. An apostle in some of our dormant pulpits would produce a moral earthquake. Wesley used to ask, "Anybody sanctified? Anybody converted? Anybody made mad?" Rom. 10 : 14, 15 ; Heb. 10 : 25.

10. Finally, faithfulness in all known duties and means, in the energy of the Holy Spirit, in the closet, the home, the church, and all places where lost souls are found. Idleness is a sin. Every hearer should be a herald. The church should be a rallying and a radiating center. All other engagements, so far as possible, should be put away for revival work. Most extraordinary and persistent efforts are necessary now to get the "lapsed masses" to come and hear the gospel. Rom. 12 : 4-8 ; Acts 20 : 17-31.

This is a most blessed work. It is a privilege that earth has above heaven and man above angels. It is a hopeful work in the instructions given and aid promised. It brings an unlimited blessing here and a glorious reward hereafter.

E. P. MARVIN.

DAVID'S PRAYER AND VOW.

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; uphold me with thy free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Ps. 51: 12, 13.

THIS is the prayer of a backslider. David had been guilty of a great sin, and as a consequence had lost the joy of salvation. Sin is like the opium drug; it stupefies the soul. David does not seem to have realized his awful condition till he was aroused by Nathan the prophet. The proof that he was a child of God, is seen in the fact that he was not angered by the rebuke, but repented. Notice—

I. DAVID'S PRAYER.—"Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation." He mourns for something he once possessed, and has now lost; this he calls the "joy of salvation."

1. *What are the joys of salvation?*

- a. The joy of *forgiveness*. "Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is passed away."
- b. The joy of *deliverance*. Shipwrecked men rescued; rescuers and rescued rejoice together.
- c. The joy of *adoption*. The homeless child adopted by wealthy people. "Behold what manner of love," etc.
- d. The joy of *expectation*. To be finally freed from sin; the sorrows of life, etc.

2. *How this joy may be lost.*

- a. By neglecting the means of grace. Private prayer; the preached word; the devotional meetings of the church.

- b. By neglecting to bear the cross ; self-denial; witnessing for Christ.
- c. By cherishing an unforgiving spirit. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you."
- d. By following the manners and customs of the world. "Come out from among them and be ye separate."

David knew full well that no one could restore this joy but God; that he could not restore himself. "Sacrifices and burnt offerings thou desirest not, else would I give them to thee," etc.

II. DAVID'S VOW.— "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways."

1. *What are God's ways ?*

- a. They are ways of *safety*. The transgressor is walking in a way of danger.
- b. They are ways of *peace*. "There is no peace saith my God to the wicked."
- c. They are ways of *pleasure*. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness." Many persons have a mistaken view of religion; they think it is a gloomy thing, etc. Christians have helped to create this mistake by talking so much of their trials, as if the worldling had none.
- d. They are ways of *life*. The transgressor is exposed to death.

2. *It is the duty of believers to teach transgressors their ways.*

- a. Common humanity should prompt us to do this. Saved ourselves, we are under obligation to try and save others.

- b. This responsibility never ceases till we have done all we can to rescue the lost. There may not appear to be much hope of success; we may feel there is no use in trying, but our responsibility has not ceased till we have tried and exhausted every known means.
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PREPARATION FOR CONVERTING MEN.

Ps. 51: 1-13.

THE first thirteen verses of this psalm, might well be reprinted in tract form, and scattered broadcast through our churches, bearing this title: "Preparation for Converting Men." The wisdom of the Christian centuries has added little, if anything, to the suggestions found here. There is much religion to-day, which does not make men spiritual — much so-called Christianity, which does not make men Christ-like. We need a revival of righteousness, — of right thinking and right living, in order to secure the approval of God, and the confidence of men.

There are some things in the way of preparation for the conversion of souls which are *absolutely essential* to success.

I. PERSONAL RIGHTNESS WITH GOD.

We sometimes manifest more concern for the *issue* of a revival, than we do for the necessary personal *preparation*. It needs to be emphasized, that the character of the work will largely resemble the character of the workers, and its thoroughness will be as the thoroughness with which God's people deal with themselves. "Unless," says one, "we know how to obtain the equipment of entire genuineness,

we should beware how we approach any human being on religious topics." Mrs. Maud Ballington Booth insists that, for the treatment of sinful souls, we need "Antiseptic Christians."

a. A person may be right with his *church*, and not be right with God.

One may so live as seemingly to enjoy the approval of his brethren, and be able on application to obtain a letter of "good and regular standing," and yet be far from the place where God can use him. It is sad but true, that the standard of the church often falls below God's standard.

b. A person may be right with his *conscience*, and not be right with God.

Conscience has its place and its functions, but it is not the rule of life and action. Many are deceived right here. While believing themselves true to conscience, they do not consider that conscience may be so abused, that it shall gauge no higher than their tastes or desires. The apostle startles us by the picture of a conscience "seared as with a hot iron." What if a man whose conscience is seared, affirms that he lives up to his conscience? Frequently persons whose religious life is certainly questionable, are heard to say, "My conscience allows me to do thus and so." And we are constrained to exclaim "What gutta-percha consciences some people have!"

There is one standard by which we are to be judged, and one *only*. By this we ought to judge ourselves. This standard is the word of God. When we bring our lives to it, we must be very careful not to select passages and half-texts which seem to favor the course we are pursuing, but rather should we bare our heart of hearts to the discriminating judicial word. The word, in its letter and spirit, must be our rule of life. If one would be right with God, he

must be right with God's word. The person who is right with the word is right with God, and to get right with God's word, we must leave off doing the things which that word condemns, and begin to do the things the word enjoins.

A Brahman recently said to a Christian: "I have found you out. You are not as good as your Book. If you Christians were as good as your Book, you would in five years conquer India for Christ." Come, Holy Spirit, and so cleanse us and fill us that we may be as good as our Book.

II. PERSONAL RIGHTNESS WITH MEN.

First, with the members of one's own church. Our work is not acceptable to God, which we do while not living in fellowship with his people. How many occasions of variance creep into the Church, separating heart from heart and hand from hand!

Have we marked the stress the word lays upon unity? "All ye are brethren;" "with one accord in one place;" "when two are agreed;" "hearts knit together in love;" "working together." The Holy Spirit works his mightiest works through a united church. A single member may make a schism in the body, and grieve and hinder the Holy Spirit. We must be right with one another or the Spirit cannot work through us.

Second, with men *outside* the church. The greatest hindrance to the salvation of men which can be named is the inconsistency of many who profess to be Christians. The apostle has not a little to say of our appearance and conduct toward them that are "without," and enjoins us to walk honestly (*decorously*) toward such, also to walk circumspectly. Peter exhorts **to an** honest conversation among

“the Gentiles” that “they may by your works which they shall behold glorify God.” We are to live better than worldly men. Our morality, and honesty, and charity are to be better than theirs. Every influence going forth from our lives is to throb with a holier pulse and crystallize in a nobler mould. Any person can give alms ; but alms for “Jesus’ sake” give a quality which differentiates the act from the best and loftiest acts of unregenerate humanity. Men to-day are not out with Christ. Not out with the gospel of Christ ; they are out, and justly so, with those who profess and do not possess. To save men we must live consistently with our holy profession. It has well been said : “Christ is to the world largely what the Christian is — increasing or decreasing as Christians manifest him in their being or doing.” A man right with God and right with men, will be able to teach transgressors God’s ways and “sinners *shall be converted* unto thee.”

S. HARTWELL PRATT.

HARVEST TIME.

“*Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.*” Joel 3: 13.

THE text is a metaphor borrowed from the work of the farmer. Human beings are compared to standing grain, and invading armies to reapers. The people referred to were ripe for destruction, and God calls the executioners of his wrath to cut them down.

But I desire to use the words in another and more blessed sense. You remember that our Saviour spoke of a spiritual harvest: “Say not ye that there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest, but I say unto you

lift up your eyes, and behold, the fields are already white unto harvest."

1. *Harvest is a Time when Laborers are in Great Demand.*—"The harvest truly is great and the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth more laborers into his harvest."

God uses human instrumentalities in saving souls. He works through men and women. He does not say, pray God to gather the harvest. The need of the times in which we live is laborers—men who are workers. The harvest was never so great; *pray for workers!*

Remember, too, the Lord is a good paymaster. "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life."

2. *Harvest is a Time that Calls for Tremendous Exertion.*—The reaper must go to the grain. He cannot sit in his house, or under a shade tree and reap. Then, the reaper must not go alone, he must have a sickle—"put ye in the sickle." We must take the word of God which is sharp as a sickle. "The gospel is the power of God." The first thing the reaper does is to cut the grain and lay it low. The preacher must use the sickle. He must preach sermons that cut, if he would gather sheaves. Peter did; for we read, "Now when they heard this, they were cut in their hearts, and cried out and said, Men and brethren, *what shall we do?*"

But the work of harvesting is not done yet; it has only been begun. When the grain is cut, it must then be bound up into sheaves. O, brethren, there is for all of us a ministry of consolation. Jesus was sent not only for the fall of many, but also for the consolation of many. He said, "He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted."

But the harvest work is not done yet. It must be *gathered into barns*. Converts must be gathered into the churches. On the day of Pentecost they that were baptized were “added unto the Church.”

3. *Harvest Time is a Time of Great Anxiety*.—A few days’ neglect may lose the crop. Then is the time to use the *sickle*. When cut, it must be gathered soon—“The King’s business requires haste.”

4. *Harvest Time is a Time of Gladness*.—“They joy as in the time of harvest.”

Believer, are you reaping?

Application: *Sinner*, what will you do when the harvest is past?

C. H. SPURGEON.

A GENERAL RELIGIOUS AWAKENING.

“*And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.*” *Neh. 8:1.*

WE have here a typical, old-time, general awakening; and as the general principles and specific requirements which condition a genuine revival of religion are the same in all ages, we may learn valuable lessons for our work to-day from this interesting account of an ancient season of grace to the Jewish people.

I. PREVAILING RELIGIOUS INTEREST AND ENTHUSIASM.

1. The people assembled near the temple. It is inspiring and assuring to earnest Christian effort in pulpit or pew, to see the special services largely attended.

2. There was a prevailing eagerness to have God's word. When the simple, plain, pungent, gospel message is reverently received, and given that serious consideration which its solemn import demands, an immediate spiritual quickening is inevitable. The word of God is quick and powerful, even to the amazing extent of being the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Hear it, O perishing soul!

3. The spiritual condition of the people was now greatly improved, better than it had been for the last two centuries. If the people will only come within the circle of spiritual influence, results are guaranteed.

II. WHAT PRODUCED THIS CHANGE?

1. In part it was doubtless the result of the discipline of affliction. To no other people would captivity have been such a deep national humiliation and general distress. Their afflictions continued long after their release and return to the home land. By this rigorous, but righteous discipline, this suffering people was brought in deep penitence to the only and all-sufficient Consolation of Israel. Blessed ministry of suffering!

2. The divine blessing on faithful effort. For many years Ezra had faithfully performed the functions of his holy office. No manifest results rewarded his self-denying labors; his was only the joy of conscious faithfulness. But finally his was the unspeakable enjoyment of leading on the people in a glorious general religious awakening. Verily, our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

3. Divinely blest capable leadership. So as the day demands, Providence exalts to leadership capable and consecrated servants, like Ezra at this time; like Wesley, Albright, Otterbein, Moody, and others in later times. It

is only when the pastor stands forth with a glowing zeal and alive to the responsibility of his leadership, that the people will go out in sympathy, prayer, and personal effort to bring the unsaved to Jesus.

4. The quickening power of divine truth. Ezra put great honor upon the word of God, so still we must preach the word. Then young and old alike will catch the spirit of the message, and if sovereign grace prevail, if the people yield to the gracious influences of the auspicious hour, angels will tune their harps to higher harmonies as they look down with delight on a church enjoying a glorious general awakening.

J. B. KANAGA.

PENTECOSTAL POWER.

"Ye shall receive power." Acts 1:8.

God works through means in spiritual things as well as in material. The church is his instrument. God will not and cannot violate his laws. Electricity is the best physical agent known by which to illustrate the workings of the Holy Ghost. Electricity can do almost anything, but only in conformity to law, only by means of conductors, only as its way is prepared. Let the machinery be in order, and see how the electricity flies along the wires, carrying your messages, pushing your cars, furnishing your light; but let the machinery be out of order, let the wire be cut, and where is your electricity? Even so the Holy Ghost. Let the conditions be complied with, and how he flashes forth light, power, salvation! Let the wire be cut, and even the Holy Ghost cannot overleap the break. The fire from heaven cannot come.

So let us look at this Pentecostal power and see some of its characteristics and conditions. What is it ?

1. It is the power of religious *earnestness*. Half-hearted religion is no religion at all. God wants the whole heart or none. Earnestness is working at religion, not playing at it. The disciples knew the power existed. They meant to have it. To get it they would meet God's conditions whatever they were. Religious earnestness means ardor, intensity, continuance, determination, irresistibleness, victory. Without it there can be no Pentecostal power.

2. Pentecostal power is *the power of union*. Forty sticks will not make forty separate fires scattered over the prairie. They will all go out. Put them all together, and now see what a blaze. Again and again we are told that those one hundred and twenty disciples were *all* in that upper room—not one hundred and nineteen, but one hundred and twenty. All there, and with one accord. Think how some church members never unite in prayer and work with the rest of the church. O how these weaken the strength of the Church !

3. Pentecostal power is the power to *witness for Christ*. Christianity is a religion that advances by means of testimony ; and *only so*. Where no one speaks for it, it dies. It needs the tongue. The disciples were to be witnesses for Christ. For the first thirty or forty years there were no books written about him. His church grew mightily, but all by means of talk. If the first disciples had not talked more about Jesus than some of his present disciples do, his cause would have been dead before the New Testament was written.

4. Pentecostal power is the *power of God's word*. Have you noticed at Pentecost what a reasoner, what an expositor Peter has become ? What gave him such power over men's

hearts on that memorable occasion ? Read over his address, and you will find that it is founded on quotations from the Old Testament. Peter treated it as the word of God. Have you observed how often we read in the Acts, “ And the word of God *grew* and multiplied ? ” A thought is like a seed — it has life in it and it grows. Did you ever know a church to have Pentecostal power when it did not honor the divine word ?

5. Pentecostal power is the *power of prayer*. O how I would like to have heard the prayers in that upper room ! Such thanksgiving for the life, and death, and resurrection of Jesus ! Such supplications in the Holy Spirit ! Such confessions of sin and unworthiness, and requests for pardon ! O here was prayer, just in the right place and time and manner, just as Jesus had directed ! And what an answer it received ! Who can explain, analyze, define this power of prayer ? Christians, do we want apostolic baptism ? Do we want Pentecostal power ? Are we willing to pay for it the Pentecostal price of apostolic prayer ?

We have waited six thousand years for steam and electricity ; but these forces existed even in Eden, and might have been used had we only known how. We have waited two thousand years for the conversion of the world. The power to bring it about exists. It is possessed by the Holy Ghost. It is Pentecostal power. Shall we have it ? Shall we have it now ?

F. R. BERRY.

AT EASE IN ZION.

“Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.” Amos 6:1.

ZION originally was the name of one of the hills upon which Jerusalem was built, and gradually came to signify the city itself, and then, in the course of time, to designate the church of God.

I. CONSIDER WHO THE PERSONS ARE THAT MAY BE SAID TO BE IN ZION.

1. All who dwell in Christian lands. The text refers to those who dwelt in Jerusalem.

2. But more particularly those who have made a profession of faith in Christ. They are in a special sense in *Zion*.

II. CONSIDER WHO THEY ARE THAT MAY BE SAID TO BE AT EASE IN ZION.

1. Every unconverted soul that is not anxious about salvation; living in carnal security, and without hope in the world.

Thank God, this does not rest on all who have not a conscious trust in the Redeemer. God has never said, “Woe to that man who is troubled about his soul; who mourns his sins,” but, “Woe to that man who is at ease in *Zion*.”

2. Those Christian parents who are not concerned about the salvation of their children.

3. Those professing Christians who can, but do not regularly hear the preached word; who spend the sacred hours of the Sabbath for earthly gain or pleasure.

4. Those professors of religion who can be content to be absent from the meetings of God’s people for prayer when it is manifestly in their power to be present.

5. Those who are not concerned about the cause of Christ in their own church and neighborhood. Should we not be concerned about the fewness of conversions? Should we not be concerned about the decline of church attendance in many places? Dr. Goodwin affirms that only about one third of the membership of Chicago churches attend preaching regularly. What an awful example to the world! Should we not be concerned at the increase of infidelity? Fathers and mothers, what are your children to be — Christians or infidels?

Now, we claim that Christians are largely responsible for this condition of things. *Take conversions.* “When Zion travailed, she brought forth.” There are usually as many anxious seekers in a congregation as there are anxious Christians. When we are as anxious for souls as for dollars; when we rest not day nor night, and give God no rest, — then, and not till then, shall sinners be converted to God, and “he will establish, and make Jerusalem a joy and a praise in the earth.”

Take church attendance. When God’s professed people attend church regularly, then perhaps the world will — perhaps our children will. Have we any reason to expect they will till then?

III. CONSIDER THE SOLEMN AND AWFUL IMPORT OF THAT WORD — “WOE!”

How can we dwell upon it? How can we describe it? O, the solemnity of eternal things! O, the terribleness of the wrath of an offended God! “He that knoweth his Master’s will,” — *knoweth it*, mark you, — “and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.” “Curse ye Meroz, yea, saith the angel of the Lord, Curse ye bitterly *because* she came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

HASTE TO THE RESCUE.

‘Salute no man by the way.’ Luke 10 : 4.

LUKE is the only one of the evangelists giving us an account of the sending out of the seventy. And their going as well as the charge they received is a most significant lesson for us. There is something in their going out two by two. This is a most helpful suggestion for our work to-day. If you have failed to lead your friend to Christ alone, call to your assistance a friend. Remember the illustration of the four men, in the New Testament, who brought one man to Christ. The charge of the seventy all applies to us, the “harvest is great” to-day. We are messengers of peace. Men are not only sick, but dead ; and our dependence is entirely upon Him, not upon an evangelist or upon a perfect system of work. All these are lessons to be drawn from the text.

I. This command in the text, of course, meant much to the Oriental ; for their salutation, oftentimes, consumed a half-hour’s time. Christ wanted them to know that they were on the King’s business, and that they had time only for the healing of the sick and the carrying of good tidings. This is the same spirit that Elisha had, when he received his blessing ; that Paul had when he said, “None of these things move me ;” and that Gehazi had when he ran with Elisha’s staff to lay it on the dead boy in Shunem. It is a special message for the time of revival. Things right at any other time, may be absolutely wrong in the day of God’s special grace. God’s children cannot be too careful. A single misdemeanor might stay a work of grace.

II. The text means, I am sure, that we should show by our faces that we realize the condition of the unsaved. It

is easy enough to tell from our countenances when our friends are dead physically, not so easy when they are dead in sin. Second, there is a hint as to the way we should pray. "The effectual agonizing prayer availeth much." Third, we should be desperately in earnest. I can imagine how Gehazi ran from Carmel to Shunem, never swerving an instant from his path, stopping never an instant to salute his friends. Why should he? There was a boy dead in the home, the father weeping by his side, and the mother in the mountains with her heart breaking. These conditions are repeated every day, only we have the position of Gehazi. God help us to be faithful.

III. Did you ever realize that you were standing in the way of others coming to Christ? God has commissioned us as truly as his Son commissioned the seventy. Our inconsistent living and our failure to give a good testimony may mean hundreds of people lost, and a tremendous reckoning at the judgment seat of Christ will be the result. Never, until God's children are right, can God use them; never until they are desperately in earnest, can they make an impression for good on the unsaved. If the whole church or any considerable part of it should move out after the unsaved, in the spirit of the seventy, "saluting no man by the way," it would be only a little while before souls would come flocking into the kingdom like doves to their windows.

J. WILBUR CHAPMAN.

GOING TO THE MULTITUDE.

“And when they were come to the multitude,” etc. Matt. 17 : 14.

I. THE PREPARATION FOR MEETING THE MULTITUDE.—Christ took three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, up into a high mountain, and was transfigured before them. This was a fulfillment of his promise recorded in chapter 16, verse 28 : “Verily I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” O, before we are qualified to go with saving power to the sorrowing, helpless, sin-burdened people, we need to have a vision of the glorified Christ ! Two things are essential,—(1) Secret fellowship with the Lord and Master; (2) Faith in the divine power of the Christ, and in the glory of his coming kingdom. We must ascend the Mount of Transfiguration before we are fitted to go down into the valley of disease and sin.

II. THE DIVINE COMMISSION TO GO TO THE MULTITUDE.—The disciples fell into a very common mistake, namely, that it is a desirable thing to be continually in a state of religious ecstasy. Peter was spokesman as usual, and no doubt voiced the sentiment of himself and his two companions, when he said : “Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us build three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.”

Peter forgot two important facts,—(1) That Moses and Elias did not belong to this world ; (2) That the disciples had a great work to do among their fellow-men.

Then there came a voice from the cloud that overshadowed them, saying, “This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.” Yes, hear ye him. Whatsoever he saith unto you, do. We must not follow our own desires or imaginings.

We must obey the Son of the Eternal. The command is, "Hear ye Him." Jesus speaks, listen! "And he said, Let us go down to the multitude."

We have said that the mistake of the disciples is a common one. The fact is there are a great many professors of religion whose chief delight and aim appears to be to get on the Mount of Transfiguration and *stay there*; while the unsaved, suffering, godless multitude never gives them an anxious thought. Their favorite hymn is, "My willing soul would stay in such a frame as this, and *sit*, and sing itself away to everlasting bliss." Yes, that's what they would do; and it is just about all they do do — just *sit* and *sing*. To all such the voice of God says: "Hear ye him." "Go, work to-day in my vineyard." "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." "Go quickly and tell my disciples, I am risen."

III. THE NEARNESS OF THE MULTITUDE.—They left the mountain-top, and at the foot, in the plain, they found the multitude. The sorrows and wants of mankind are not far from every one of us. It is only a little way from wealth to poverty. The man who is on the mountain-top of prosperity to-day may be in the valley of penury to-morrow. There is only a step between the mount of joy and the vale of sorrow. In what various ways darkness may settle down in our homes! O, that we may have Jesus with us then! There is only a little way from your home to the home of squalor and want; between the marble mansion on the boulevard and the wretched tenement house on the back street. Listen! Don't you hear Jesus saying, "Let us go down to the multitude"?

IV. THE CONDITION AND NEEDS OF THE MULTITUDE.—These have always been the same. Notice the make-up of that one. There was sickness there; there was sin; there

was an anxious parent ; there were timid and discouraged disciples ; unbelieving and mocking skeptics. How good it was to have Jesus come with the disciples who had been with him in the Mount, and who had seen and felt the glory and power of the world to come.

Jesus said, "Let *us* go down to the multitude." He goes with his disciples on their mission of mercy. "Go ye, and disciple all nations, and lo ! I am with you always." We need not fear to go where Jesus commands and where his presence accompanies us. "Let us go down." Ah, that is Christ-like. He came down to us ! Let us go down to the multitude that we may lift them up. He must touch them, if he would save them.

AWAKE ! ARISE !

"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5 : 14.

HERE is a text that is a sermon. I would put the trumpet to my lips and sound this text over and over again, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." There is the sinner described ; there is the sinner addressed ; there is the sinner pointed to the Saviour. What more would you have ?

"*Awake thou that sleepest.*" The man who is not converted, the soul here that is not walking in the light of Christ's grace, is asleep ; you are like one who at twelve o'clock in the day is still soundly snoring on his bed. It is not a complimentary description, is it ? The Bible never was complimentary to a sinner ; the Bible always speaks

the plain, hard truth ; that is why folks don't like the Bible, and don't like the preacher.

If you have not wakened up to knowledge of sin, painful knowledge of sin, as a plague and a disease that has fastened on your vitals, which you cannot shake off; if you have not wakened up to a knowledge of God, and of the judgment, of heaven and of hell, where are you but sleeping — soundly sleeping? The awful realities of existence are all round about you, but are unheard and unappreciated. If you want to rouse a man, you have got to rouse him; you will never rouse a heavy sleeper, like some of you, by standing up and washing your hands in invisible soap and water, and whispering polite nothings. If you are only wakened up, you will admit all I am saying. A man never forgets the time of his awakening.

Ah! my careless friend, or my busy friend, busy or careless with the things of time, but asleep as to the things of eternity, this is no world for sleeping. There may be circumstances where sleep is appropriate, but that sleep of your soul is awfully inappropriate just now. Do you know where I once caught a man sleeping? I once caught a man lying asleep — a drunken sleep — between the fourfoot, as it is called, of the railway, and the midnight express coming thundering down the bank. Such is thy state, O unconverted soul. Thou art asleep between the rails, and God's judgment express is coming now, and is almost on top of you. I wakened that man didn't I? How could I pass him? And didn't I wake him rather roughly? Wouldn't I have been a fool if I had sat down and said polite things to him? Was I not his best friend when I gripped him and held him, and half asleep and half awake, got him into safety. And am I not your friend to stand in the face of you to-night and tell you the truth?

In this wonderful little text of mine *there is another trumpet blast* — two trumpet calls in one text; not many texts like that! “Awake, thou that sleepest, and” — and what? “and arise from the dead.” What does that mean? I think that there is a beautiful sequence in these two trumpet calls, in these two evangelical cries out from the preacher’s heart, and out from God’s heart, and out from the Holy Ghost’s heart. First of all, “awake;” that’s the first thing. But every man who awakens is not a man who is up, is he? — No, no! Some of us make a big difference between awakening and getting up. It is not so hard to awaken some of you, but it is a job to get you on to your feet. If it were not for the spur that you *have* to go, some of you don’t know when you would go. It is one thing to be wakened up, and another thing to get up. How many things come in between these!

And, spiritually, how true that is! I believe it is illustrated at every evangelistic meeting. If we are preaching the word of God, we will have people interested, and they will sit back and say, “That is true, that is straight, this is plain; now that’s the kind of preaching that doesn’t fly over a fellow’s head.” You admit that is true; you are awakened; but that is all. You do not come to Christ. There is one thing which keeps people from getting up; sometimes it keeps me. I have wakened and not got up; this was the fatal thing; *I fell over again, and dreamed that I was up*. Haven’t you done that? I dreamed that I was up and dressed, and then afterward woke with a start and an awful disappointment, to find that it was all to do yet. I’m afraid there are a lot of people that way in religion.

Then, to help you to arise, do you notice what the text says? — “*Arise from the dead.*” What does that mean? That is the counter-blast to those seductions that are trying

to grip you in their soft embraces while I am trying to arouse you. There is the truth, too, to describe what is round about you and the state you are in. Who would sleep in a graveyard? Who would live among bones and decay? And that is where you are living, unconverted sinner. "Arise from the dead." That is to help you make a jump; for you will be like them if you stay with them much longer, utterly dead, no more impressed with the rousing call of the gospel; and the very Spirit of God himself may say at last, "Sleep on, sleep on. Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone."

Trembling, anxious soul, look to Jesus! and the more you turn away your eyes from Sinai to another hill — the moment you turn your eyes to Calvary you will get peace. Look to him, the Light of the world. He is the Light that calms my fears, that delivers me from all my guilt and condemnation.

Christ shall give thee light — light to see by, light for all thy path along the road; and light, you know, means everything here. Darkness means all that is fearful and gloomy and paralyzing; light means everything that is helpful and hopeful, and liberating, and enriching. Come to Christ; that is to say, let in the light of peace and pardon that streams from the crucified and glorified Saviour. Let him shine on you, and let him shine *in* you.

JOHN MC NEILL.

PETER DELIVERED.

“Peter therefore was kept in prison : but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” Acts 12 : 5.

I. PETER IMPRISONED.

1. He was put in prison by Herod. This was the grandson of Herod the Great who murdered the innocents, and nephew of Herod who beheaded John the Baptist. They were a cruel race. He had already put James to death, “and because he saw it pleased the Jews, he put Peter in prison.”

2. Peter was carefully guarded. They “delivered him to four quarternions of soldiers” — sixteen in all. Four kept guard at a time ; two outside the prison, and two inside ; to these Peter was fastened.

3. Peter was to be put to death after the Passover. Some people have a great deal of religion, and very little piety. The Jews could put Christ to death on the cross between two thieves, but they could not leave a dead body on a cross over the Sabbath. They could put Peter to death, but it must not be on the Passover, or Sabbath week.

II. PETER PRAYED FOR.

“But prayer was made without ceasing for Peter.” Trials often come like the waves of the sea, one following quick after the other. It was so with the church in Jerusalem at this time. Stephen the deacon had been stoned to death ; a great persecution followed that scattered the saints ; there came a famine that pressed heavily upon the poor ; then James was put to death by the sword, and now Peter is in prison, and is to die. What can they do ? What did they do ? — Took it to the Lord in prayer.

This was *united prayer* (Matt. 18:19); it was *persevering prayer*, "without ceasing," it was *specific prayer*, "for Peter;" it was *earnest prayer*. James 5:16.

"But there's a power which man can wield,
When mortal aid is vain;
That eye, that arm, that love to reach,
That listening ear to gain.

"That power is prayer, which soars on high,
Through Jesus to the throne;
And moves the Hand which moves the world,
And brings salvation down."

III. PETER DELIVERED.

They put Peter in prison and double guarded him. Surely they forgot the "great stone," and "Cæsar's seal," and the "Roman soldiers" that guarded the Saviour's tomb!

It was the last night. Peter was sleeping. O for the rest of faith! The church was praying. Then an angel left heaven; came to earth; entered that prison, and delivered the captive.

Is not the manner of Peter's deliverance a great object lesson, teaching us how an imprisoned soul is delivered by the power of the gospel? Observe the order of events:—

1. A light shone in the prison. A light shone round Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus.

2. The angel smote him. He did this to awake him. "Awake, thou that sleepest." The law smites that we may be saved.

3. The angel raised him up. So Jesus took Peter's wife's mother by the hand; so Christ took the sinking Peter by the hand on the sea.

4. The angel commanded him to gird himself and put on his sandals. There is always something for man to do.

We must work with God. We must obey God's messenger.

5. His chains fell off. The grace of God removes our sins, and breaks old habits.

6. He wist not that it was true. "Am I awake, or am I dreaming?" Sometimes the young convert is at the first in a like condition. But at last there comes the joy of *assurance*; then Peter said, "Now *I know* that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me."

7. And then—what then did Peter do?—Went and told the church what great things God had done for him in answer to prayer. Have you done so?

THE DYING ROBBER SAVED.

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him."
Luke 23: 39-43.

In connection with this whole subject consider,—

1. *The previous character of this man.*

a. He believed in the true God—"Dost thou not fear God?" Verse 40. He was not therefore a Roman or a Greek, or any other pagan. He was a Jew or at least a proselyte to the Jewish faith.

b. He believed in a life beyond the grave and in the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. Why *fear* God? He was now fastened to his cross, and suffering the last measure of human woe that this life could give. A few hours more and he would be dead and his body cast out among the carcasses into the frightful vale of Hinnom. He, so far as this world was concerned, had nothing more to dread. The reference, therefore, is to a life after death, in which a just God will punish the sins committed here.

He was not a Sadducee but belonged to the orthodox class of the Jews.

c. He had become a hardened wretch, known not by his name but by his crimes. The fact of death should appall him. The sufferings of another by his side should have touched his heart with kindred pity. But instead, so thoroughly reckless and abandoned had he become that even on the cross he joins the other robber in mocking and reviling Jesus in his dying agonies.

They crucified two thieves with Christ, and at first both of them spent their time in this frightful way. Mark 15 : 32 says : " And they that were crucified with him reviled him." Matt. 27 : 44 says : " The thieves also which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth." Further down than this humanity could not sink. What a picture of the ruin that sin can work, even in one short lifetime ! Brought up amid religious privileges and possessed of a good popular knowledge of these, he had yet cast them all off and was here dying, deservedly, a death of the deepest shame ; and so utterly indifferent was he, that he spent his time mocking another sufferer. What a thing to be dreaded sin is ! God save us from it.

2. *His true repentance* -- A great change has taken place in the case of one of these two robbers. Brought to see his true condition as a lost sinner, by the Spirit of God, instead of reviling I now hear him pleading for mercy. We have here all the stages of a wonderful conversion clearly brought out. His genuine repentance is evidenced, —

a. In his viewing sin in its right relation ; i. e., in its relation to God. " Fear God." Like David in the fifty-first Psalm, his cry is, " Against thee, and thee only have I sinned."

b. In his frank acknowledgment of his own guilt. There was no concealment, no condoning, no blaming of others or of circumstances, no excusing of himself. He made a clear breast of it all. "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds." Verse 41.

c. In his solicitude for the welfare of his brother robber. His remonstrance was addressed to him in the hope that he might stop his sinful course. He wanted to lead his old companion in vice away from what he was doing, to a better life. He saw the awfulness of sin in himself, and he sought to save another from its awful consequences. This is the way the world is to be won to God.

3. *His strong faith.*—Had this robber believed at the tomb of Lazarus ; when the thousands were miraculously fed ; when Jesus walked upon the waves of the sea and hushed the midnight storm on the Lake of Galilee ; or at the resurrection ; or the ascension of our Lord, we might not have wondered so much. But at the time when the confidence of his very disciples, who had witnessed the wonders of his life, was completely shattered ; when all his followers had forsaken him and fled ; when our Lord was actually dying, amid the curses of his nation, the same dread death with the robber himself — betrayed, deserted, derided ; — through all this he exercised at that dark hour a living faith in the blessed Saviour. He believed,—

a. That Christ had a kingdom.

b. That even then, with his head crowned with thorns, he would hearken to requests.

c. Nay, more, that he would grant actual, positive blessings.

All hail, thou dying robber! Snatched from the jaws of death, and washed from all thy sins, how bright the diadem that glitters on thy brow to-day! Where else can

we find such an example of wondrous, triumphant faith as thine!

4. *His prayer*.—"Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." You and I would have hushed him for daring to obtrude his request at such a time as this. Too late! See the agony of the Saviour's suffering now. Remember what it means. It is "the hour" to which he had so long and anxiously looked forward, and for which he had come into the world. The earth beneath is ready to shudder and the skies above to drape themselves in mourning. O no! trouble not the Master now with thy petition. He cannot pay attention when his soul is full of woe, and his life is being offered up as a ransom for many. Thus would we have said. But a sinner once awakened to a sense of guilt cannot be restrained. If this thief must perish, he is resolved to perish at the cross, pleading to be remembered by his Lord."

His prayer was,—

- a. Short — only a single sentence.
- b. Humble — only to be remembered.
- c. Earnest — the petition of an awakened soul on the brink of a lost eternity.
- d. Reliant. "Remember all my past bad life, my crimes against society, my sins against God ; call them all up if thou wilt, but side by side with them remember, too, that I am dying, trusting in thy pardoning grace. If I must perish, I will perish only there."
- e. It included all that he needed.

5. *Our Lord's Answer*.— During all the mocking and taunting of the crucifixion, our Lord remained silent. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." But when the cry of the penitent reached his ear, he answered. His great heart melted into

tenderness. A gleam of joy passed through his suffering soul. With a word he opened the gates of glory, saying, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise." The word "paradise" is found in the New Testament only three times,—in the text, in 2 Cor. 13 : 3, in connection with the "third heaven," and in Rev. 2 : 7, as the place in which grows "the tree of life." From Rev. 22 : 1-6, we learn that the tree of life is where the throne of God is ; where his servants serve him day and night ; where they shall see his face ; where there is no night, and so forth. Then paradise is heaven. To be in paradise is to be where Jesus is.

The time when they were to reach that blest abode was "to-day." O, there is a gospel ring about this "to-day." "To-morrow" is always Satan's time ; "to-day" is always the Lord's. Call to mind the opening and closing scenes of that great day. What a morning, and what an evening ! In the morning, Jesus in the earthly Jerusalem, surrounded by a frenzied mob thirsting for his blood ; condemned, beaten, dragging his cross ; in the evening in the heavenly Jerusalem, surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of the heavenly host. And among the ransomed ones was the robber who had repented on the cross.

CONCLUSIONS.

1. If Christ heard prayer when passing through his awful sufferings on the tree, will he not hear prayer now that he is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour ?

2. How quickly a soul can be saved ! At nine o'clock in the morning this robber was with others reviling ; at twelve o'clock, noon, he was a child of God. See Luke 23 : 44. The New Testament is full of examples of sud-

den conversions—as the woman of Samaria ; the three thousand at the Pentecost ; Paul, the jailor and his family, etc. Why, then, should you delay any more ? Settle the matter at once, here, now, and go home to rejoice in a Saviour's love. We should expect conversions every day.

3. Salvation is all of grace. This man's hands and feet were fastened to the tree. He had no righteousness to offer. Behind him there was but a wicked life ; yet the Lord had compassion on him and saved him without works and without merit. And so he will save you.

4. Not only can Christ *justify*, and thus give us a *title* to heaven in a short time ; but he can also quickly *sanctify* us and thus make us *meet* for heaven.

5. This is the only case of a death-bed conversion recorded in the Bible. From this learn (a) that we need never despair, (b) and that we should never presume.

JOHN L. CAMPBELL.

JOY OVER REPENTING SINNERS AMONG THE ANGELS.

' Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Luke 15 : 10.

Christ is teaching in Jerusalem. A concourse of plain people is listening. From the temple come companies of Pharisees and Scribes. These cultured aristocrats interrupt Christ with these words, " This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

Jesus hangs up before them two beautiful word pictures—the lost sheep and the lost piece of money ; and over these he writes, " I say unto you there is joy in heaven in the

presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Let us notice,—

1. THE CLASS REPRESENTED AS BEING SPECIALLY EXCITED BY THE EMOTION OF JOY OVER A SINNER'S REPENTANCE.

The angels of God. I have seen pastors thrilled with joy ; mothers, fathers, and friends aflame with joy as some dear one has been saved ; but who can conceive of the intense joy of the angels over one sinner that repenteth ?

The frail casket of the human body cannot sustain itself under the weight of excessive rapture any more than under the burden of excessive grief. We cannot sustain ourselves as the angels can under a mighty pressure of joy. I have read of a Roman matron who fell dead with joy because her son came back unhurt from the awful slaughter of Cannæ. Talva died of joy while reading the news of the great honors conferred on him by the Roman Senate. Pope Leo X died of joy when he heard of the capture of Milan. Columbus broke down with joy when he stepped ashore in the West Indies ; and as he saw the sunrise gilding the banners of Castile, tears of joy streamed down his cheeks and he fell on his knees and kissed the earth. But who can conceive of the exultation, the ecstasy, the transport of the angels when the prodigal returns to the Father's house and the fatted calf is killed ! The question confronts us, —

II. WHY DO THE ANGELS REJOICE WHEN A SINNER REPENTS ?

1. *Because true repentance culminates in that holiness of heart and life which is the chief glory of the angels.* The true penitent is profoundly impressed with the realization of depravity, guilt, and danger as connected with a sinful condition. This is accompanied by a sincere desire to do God's will, and an agony of solicitude for deliverance from sin's power, pollution, and results. Such anxiety impels the

penitent to look to Christ in the exercise of faith, and that look of faith wins pardon and purity.

Repentance becomes transformed into holiness. Sanctification is begun. The moral image of Christ is restored to the soul. Christ is formed in the heart. And as they behold this new victory of the Redeemer, as they see the Father clothing the ragged and long-absent child with the best robes of pardon and purity, they are swept by emotions of congratulation and delight.

2. *Because the moral character of a sinner's influence is forever changed by his conversion.* Every human being has influence. It is inseparable from existence. Its effects are as penetrating as ointment. Its presence is as manifest in every life as the leaven that swells the meal.

Each moral action and utterance is linked to a chain of sequences no mortal can foretell. Earth is a vast whispering gallery, where words and actions live on and ring on forever.

Scientists tell us that the words spoken by Abraham and Elijah are still influencing the air; that the atmosphere is a mighty library, on whose pages human actions and utterances have all been impressed. Influence is born with us like fire in the flint. It walks with us, flashes from the eyes, and radiates from us like light from the sun. Influence is posthumous; and if an evil man, like the fallen Abel, it may be said, "He being dead, yet speaketh!"

Who can measure the destructive influence of a fascinating, brilliant, cultured bad man! Hecatombs of souls have fallen over Voltaire's polished shafts of infidelity! Think of the evil influence that has rolled from the writings of Hume and Hobbes.

Now, angels see this influence destroyed, and a holy influence taking its place in a sinner's repentance and con-

version! Study the life work, and try to cast up the influence of such men as Paul, Peter, John Newton, once the dissipated English sailor, Francis Murphy, John B. Gough, and a host of men who have saved thousands and made converts centers of future moral power. When the angels witness a repentance that inaugurates a magnetic and positive holy life, it is no wonder they strike their harps with new vigor and exhibit joy in the presence of God.

Another cause of this ecstasy is that —

3. *By repentance and conversion a sinner escapes eternal retribution for his sins and secures moral fitness for eternal life.* Unrepentant, he is “condemned already.” Doomed to exile from God for unbelief, “he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Jesus says of unrepentant sinners, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.”

The angels know where and what hell is. Pollok and Milton, Cowley and Ford have written harrowing verses descriptive of perdition; but into their thrilling poetry speculation has largely entered. The angels know the locality and elements of retribution that enter into an experience of the second death.

The mole never opens its eyes until it is dying; then it looks out. So is it with men who deny the existence of hell — men who sneer at the graphic descriptions of its anguish that Jesus announced. Francis Spira, the Italian apostate, declaimed against retribution beyond the grave; but Death opened his mortal eyelids, and he cried, “God hardens me and allows me no hope.” Francis Newport taught the blasphemies Ingersoll is rehashing for mercenary ends; but death shook the scales off his spiritual eyeballs, and he cried, “Oh, the insufferable pains of hell!” The brilliant Altamont taught men that the hell of Revela-

tion was a priestly scarecrow; but Death put before his inner orbs a telescope, and as he peered through it he exclaimed, "And is there yet another hell? O, thou blasphemed, yet indulgent Lord God, hell itself will be a refuge if it shall hide me from thy frown!" As the angels look on a doomed sinner escaping the destiny of perdition, eluding the "lake that burneth," avoiding the imperishable consequences of sin, and securing that moral fitness for angelic companionship which is the necessary and exclusive qualification for eternal life, they rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Such an event is worthy of their rapture. Beautifully sings Charles Wesley:—

"Ready for you the angels wait,
To triumph in your blest estate;
Tuning their harps they long to praise
The wonders of redeeming grace."

III. WHAT LESSONS DO WE LEARN FROM THESE FACTS?

We learn that—

1. *We manifest the spirit of the angelic race when we labor to lead sinners to Christ and rejoice over their conversion.* Not in the text only, but through the whole Bible the benevolent interest of the angels in the salvation of men is illustrated. They directed Peter to the penitent Cornelius. They desired to look into the mysteries of redemption. They are to gather the elect in the first resurrection. They are to swell the anthem of the blood-washed forever.

God calls us to the work of leading sinners to Christ. Inspiration tells us that "he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins." God saves men through human agency. Men perish through human neglect of duty.

See the apostles as they toil for souls! Over Syrian deserts, through the storms of the sea, in pestilential climes, amid hunger and thirst and persecution, they hurried to tell dying men of Jesus. And multitudes, yearning for souls, have trodden in their footsteps. Brainerd and Elliott, Latimer and Baxter, Berridge and Venn, Whitefield and Wesley,—how these have talked with seraph tongues and labored with apostolic zeal for Christ! Were the whole church thus consecrated to the salvation of men, the coming century would inaugurate that colossal concert of angels at which John represents them as leading, and universal humanity thundering the chorus, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honor and glory and blessing; and every creature which is in heaven and on the earth heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.”

We learn that—

2. *The preaching with which the angels sympathize is of that type best calculated to bring sinners to repentance.* The unsaved masses clamor to hear less about atheism, pantheism, naturalism, spiritualism, and rationalism, and more about God’s invitations and offers to dying men. They want to hear less of Paine, Hume, Gibbon, Huxley, Voltaire, Darwin and other gignatic champions of error, and more about Jesus, the world’s only Saviour. The angels are pleased when pastors press home the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, and make human eloquence, oratory, rhetoric, and culture but the attractive frame in which they may the more conspicuously present Jesus as the central picture before the people. The angels are pleased when argument and illustration become finger-boards pointing the perishing to Calvary. and crying, “Behold the Lamb of God who taketh

away the sin of the world." The angels rejoice when sermons glow with sympathetic realizations of the dangers engirdling the unsaved, and when pastors look on scholarship and oratory as but "a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal" compared with the attractions of the cross.

Then we are taught —

3. *The appalling peril of a sinner over whose repentance no angels have rejoiced.* Your peril, sinner friend, must alarm the angels of God. They know that sin has but one logical issue — ETERNAL DEATH. They thrillingly realize that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Their eyes sweep these harvests of eternity.

Give the angels a chance to rejoice to-day over your repentance. They will minister to you along the checkered way of life. They will encamp in bright squadrons about you, as about Lazarus, when you are dying. And they will be your holy and immortal companions when sun, moon, and stars have faded from God's arch. Amen.

S. V. LEECH.

THE MASTER HAS COME.

"The Master has come and calleth for thee." John 11:28.

1. *Who Came?*— "The Master," that is, one who rules, governs, or has authority. How appropriate the title!

He rules in nature, the winds and the waves obeyed him; he rules in the spirit world, demons and angels obey him; he rules in the church. He is head over all; we know no Master but Jesus. There is an admirable book on the great historic religions, with the title, "Christ and other Masters." The title is a misnomer — there is no master but Christ.

2. *How He Came*.—He came *as man*; he traveled the road we travel; he came by the cradle, the workshop, and the grave. He came *as God* to dry our tears, to forgive our sins, to raise our dead.

3. *When He Came*.—Not till human sympathy had done all it could. Lazarus is dead. He had been dead four days. Why did Jesus tarry so long? Why did God leave this lost world four thousand years without the Saviour?

Physicians had done all they could. Great men they were—Plato, Socrates, Zoroaster, Guatama, Confucius. They tried all kinds of remedies,—the tonics and stimulants of natural religion; the soothing and quieting influences of poetry and pleasure; the bracing power of philosophy. But alas, the patient grew worse; and when Jesus came, the human race was not only dead in trespasses and sins—it was rotten, it sent up a moral stench. Then the Master came!

Men are still trying to revive the dead by natural methods, but it requires the supernatural. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature”—a new creation.

Christmas Evans represents four strong men on a journey to raise Lazarus. One says, “I will go down into the grave and rub him well with the sponge of natural ability.” And down he goes, but there is no result. “Well,” says the second, “come you out and let me try.” He enters the grave with a whip of scorpions, and threatening says, “I will make him feel; I will scourge him with the law.” Still dead, cold as a stone. Says the third, “Make room for me.” He enters the grave with a musical instrument; he sings to him a song of love. But there is no dancing in the grave. The fourth says, “Measures fail, but I will go for Jesus.” I see them approaching; they are conversing; they are both in tears. Jesus stands and cries, “Lazarus,

come forth," and he that was dead is alive! Glory be to God.

4. *For Whom He Calls.*—“For thee.” Religion is a personal thing. The gospel call is a personal one. Have you heard it? Then give heed to it. His stay may not be long. O, imitate Mary—“As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.”

THOMAS KELLY.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

“And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.”
John 11: 43, 44.

As a worker our Lord stands alone; no other can unite his voice with his power. And yet he is pleased to unite his disciples with himself in his blessed work of saving souls. He said to them, “Loose him and let him go.”

He always gave them something to do. When he rode into Jerusalem, he sent two of them to bring the colt. When he received the hosannas, he permitted the people to spread their garments in the way. When he would eat the passover, he sent Peter and John to prepare the supper. Even in the garden he told them to watch.

1. *Here is a Wonderful Miracle.*—Some think this was one of the most wonderful of all his miracles. Remember that the man was not only *dead*, but had been *four days dead*. The sisters had probably kept the body unburied as long as they could, hoping Jesus might at least be at the burial. What could be done? Surely it would be easier

to make a new man from the dust of the earth, than to take this poor corrupt corpse and make it live again.

Now I take it that all our Lord's miracles were symbolic,—were in fact great object lessons. The raising of Lazarus was a type of what our Lord is doing every day, in making souls alive that were dead in trespasses and sins. Some are like the ruler's little child,—dead, but with the remains of beauty even in their awful sleep. And some are like Lazarus, not only dead but foul and loathsome—they are an offense and a stench in a community. Can such a sinner be saved? Bless God, this miracle answers, yes!

2. *The Apparent Weakness of the Worker.*—He who raised the dead man, was himself man. I do not know of any miracle wrought by Christ, where his manhood is so manifest.

It is seen in his *weeping*. Angels do not weep; there are no tears in heaven, only those God has stored away in his bottle. Men weep; women weep; little children weep; and Jesus wept! It is seen in his inquiring, “*Where have ye laid him?*” He veils his omniscience. It is seen in his *agony of soul* at the grave. O how intensely human! Have you not seen it time and time again? Aye, perhaps you have even felt it.

When he came to the place, he found a cave whose mouth was closed by a large stone, and now he sought human assistance; he said, “*Take ye away the stone.*” And then as a man he *prayed*. O, be sure this is the only way to raise dead souls.

3. *Here is a Strange Sight.*—The man was alive, and yet there was something more to be done,—something that must be done by the disciples. Lazarus was wholly raised, but not wholly freed. Here was a living man in the garments of a dead man—a fitting symbol of thousands of Chris-

tians. They have been made alive, but are still bound in the grave-clothes of old habits, etc.

Lazarus was alive, and yet he was *repulsive*. A living man does not look well in a shroud. Lazarus was alive, and yet he was *helpless*; strong enough to come forth, and yet not strong enough to remove the bandages that bound him. How many are like that? They have the new life, and yet cannot speak nor work for Christ.

4. *Finally Notice the Human Helpers*.—Lazarus could not be raised without a miracle, and so a miracle was performed. He could be set at liberty without a miracle, and so a miracle for this was not wrought. This was work that the disciples could do, and so they ought to do it; it would do them good.

Lazarus had a napkin round about his *head*. Some souls come into the kingdom blindfold; they have never been instructed in the doctrines of grace. Here is work for the teacher; for some experienced disciple.

His *hands* were bound. Some come into the kingdom not knowing how to work for the Lord. Their will is good enough, but they don't know how. Some disciple must show them and train them.

His *feet* were bound. Some are alive, but they stand still; they make no progress; they are still at the mouth of the sepulcher. Some one must loose the bandages, and show them that the believers life is one of continuous progress.

His *whole body* was bound. Some are bound in the grave clothes of *prejudice*; they used to think so and so, before conversion, and they think so still. Some are in the grave clothes of *habit*; they find it almost impossible to break them off. O, but it is a noble work to help a new convert get rid of his evil habits!

C. H. SPURGEON.

NAAMAN THE LEPER.

2 Kings 5: 1-19.

IN this chapter we have an account of a man who was great and honored, but he was a leper. As quaint old Matthew Henry says, "The meanest beggar in the land would not have traded skins with him for all the world."

Let us try to place this narrative under the light of the gospel. Some kinds of invisible writing require to be placed in a strong light before the letters become visible. The Old Testament becomes a new book when read in the light of the New.

1. *There was an Analogy between this Man's Condition and the Sinners.*—Sin is often compared to disease. The leprosy was *loathsome, infectious, separating, and incurable* by man. What is fouler than vice? What separates and alienates families and friends?—Sin! And it will, if unrepented and unforgiven, separate the sinner eternally from happiness and from God.

2. *When Naaman set out to seek a Cure, he Expected to Pay for It.*—"He took ten talents of silver and six hundred pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment." Verse 5. It never entered his mind that it was to be free. This is one of the common and great mistakes of seeking souls. They want to do something, or give something for salvation. What have we to give?—Works! Our best works are but as filthy rags. Come empty handed, salvation is free.

3. *Naaman made another Mistake. He formed a Preconceived Conception of how the Cure would be Wrought.*—"I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand . . . and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and strike his

hand over the place, and recover the leper." Verse 11. "I thought." But God has said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts," etc. Seekers are often just as foolish; just as presumptuous. They are not willing to let God work in his own way. This delays the cure.

4. *Naaman was not Healed until he had Surrendered his Will.*—The sinner must submit his will to God's will. There is usually some test, as "Stretch forth thine hand," "Go wash in the pool of Siloam," "Go show thyself to the priest." This time it was, "Go dip thyself seven times in Jordan." To-night it may be, "Stand up," "Come to the inquiry room."

5. *Mark the Change the Cure Produced in Naaman:—*

1. His skin was like the skin of a little child. This showed the completeness of the cure. Verse 14.
2. His gratitude was awakened. Verse 15.
3. His conscience was quickened. Verse 18

LOVE, SALVATION, AND SEPARATION.

Eph. 2 : 4 ; Heb. 2 : 3 ; Luke 16 : 26.

I WOULD draw your attention to three passages of scripture, which present to us three of God's great things : Eph. 2 : 4 ; Heb. 2 : 3 ; and Luke 16 : 26. These three things are great love, great salvation, and great separation. An old writer, in speaking about divine love says that "love had heaven for its birthplace—that the very heaven of heavens was unable to contain God's love, and one day it overflowed heaven's banks and came down upon a sin-cursed world." It seems to me that God's love is like an ocean without a bottom, like a sea without a shoal, like a height

without a summit ; and I am not at all surprised that some one in our country, after hearing a sermon about love, was moved to pen the following lines : —

“Could we with ink the ocean fill ; were every blade of grass a quill ;
Were the whole world of parchment made, and every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God, would drain the ocean dry,
Nor would the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky.”

Think of the character of God's love. It is unchanging. How unlike human love, which quickly tires, easily falters, and rapidly changes. But God's love to this sin-doomed and guilty world remains unaltered. Some of you in this audience to-night may be here with your life blighted, your hopes blasted, your constitution wrecked, and your sins rising up before you like an Alpine summit ; but I want to tell you on the authority of God's unalterable word, that while he hates our sins, there is not a sinner in the universe whom he does not love. There is a story told in England of an only daughter who ran away from home ; and after weary months had elapsed, the mother received tidings that her child was living a sad, unhappy life in one of our northern cities. She took the earliest opportunity to reach that city ; she walked around its streets in search of the one she loved, but failed to find her. A day or two after that mother had left for home a young woman was seen to enter a saloon ; she was attracted to a photograph fastened on the wall ; and as she looked at it, she recognized it at once as her mother's, and beneath it she read the words from her mother's own hand : “Mary, I love you still.” That mother loved her child, though she hated her sins.

Proof of God's Love.—Perhaps some one may be asking for the proof of God's love. I believe the greatest expression of divine love to a fallen race is to be seen at the cross of Christ. God gave heaven's best gift for earth's worst creature, and that gift was his beloved Son.

The Lord Jesus trod this weary world for three and thirty years, and then voluntarily laid down his life as man's ransom; and as he hung upon that tree, while the darkness was thickening, while devils were mocking, men deriding, and women weeping, he bowed his blessed head and uttered those memorable words, "It is finished." And as by faith we gaze upon that scene, our hearts overflow with adoration to him while we sing :—

" Oh, 't was love, 't was wondrous love!
The love of God to me;
It brought my Saviour from above;
To die on Calvary."

But let me remind you that God not only shows his great love, but he also presents to us his great salvation. Perhaps the reason the blessed Holy Spirit calls it a great salvation is that it was purchased at a great cost, and it produces the most marvelous results. It is well to remember that the word "salvation" implies that men are lost; and let us never forget that there is not a chapter in our Bible, not a page of history, not an action of our own lives, but demonstrates beyond the possibility of a doubt that man is lost, yes, as much lost as a traveler who has missed his way, or the mariner who is on a trackless ocean without chart or compass.

If some one here is asking, "Whom does Jesus save?" the word of God answers, "Sinners." The Lord Jesus had

but one object in leaving heaven's highest heights for earth's deepest depths, and that was to seek and save those who are lost. The word of God fairly teems with illustrations of his saving grace. There was Saul of Tarsus, who tells us he was the chief of sinners, and yet he had a meeting with the Son of God on the Damascus road, and the Lord Jesus in his transcendent grace saved him. There was Manasseh, who made the streets of Jerusalem swim with blood; there was Mary Magdalene, out of whom the Lord cast seven devils; and there was the dying thief, his body hanging on the cross, his soul hovering upon the brink of eternal ruin; and as he appealed to the Son of God, he in his wondrous compassion rescued and saved him. I want you, my friends, to take encouragement from these illustrations, and, though you may feel that you are too bad to live and too bad to die and too bad for heaven, and sometimes you may think you are almost too bad for hell, remember you are not too bad for the arms of the Lord Jesus.

Belief in Christ.—If some one is asking, "How is this salvation to be obtained?" the answer is, not by weeping, not by working, not by waiting, but by the one and only divinely appointed way of faith in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures declare that "to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to those that believe in his name." The Spirit of God is pressing on you the acceptance of heaven's priceless gift, and it is within the power of every soul in this vast audience either to accept God's gift and praise him for it throughout eternal ages in unclouded light, or to reject it and be lost forever. As I stand up to address audiences in different parts of the world, the thought often cheers me that every soul may be saved—yes, saved, by the grace of God, immediately, eternally; saved from the guilt of

sin, from the power of sin, from the love of sin, and in a little while, from the presence of sin. And throughout eternity we shall more and more realize what is the extent of that "so great salvation."

I desire to remind you also of the great separation between the soul and the living God. The cause of this separation is sin. There was a time in the history of man when he basked in the sunlight of God's presence; but sin entered paradise, and from that hour to this, man has been estranged from the Creator. Some of you here to-night doubtless have some darling sin to which you are clinging with the most frightful tenacity. As long as that is so, the separation between your soul and the living God will continue, though he is longing to bring you right by the precious blood of his own dear Son.

Remember, lastly, the solemnity of the separation. How keenly we feel some earthly separations,—hardly one here who has not been called to bid farewell to some loved one who has gone to some foreign land. We remember how much we felt the parting, and how hard it was to give the last good-bys even for this earthly parting. But, my friends, if you are not willing here to part company with your sins, there must be an eternal separation from all that is holy and blessed in the world to come. Jesus died that there might be no such awful separation, and we need but yield ourselves heartily, fully, and unreservedly to him, and we shall by his grace meet—

"Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end."

CHARLES INGLIS.

INCENTIVES TO SEEK COMPANIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL.

"We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you : Come thou with us, and we will do thee good ; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Num. 10: 29.

THE first year of the journey of the Israelites in the wilderness had expired, and the tribes, gathering under their respective standards, were watching the moving of the rising cloud, when Moses, amid the accumulated interests of that solemn hour, addressed the language of the text to Hobab, his brother-in-law. Notice —

I. THE CHARACTER BY WHICH HE DESIGNATES THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

1. *They were a journeying people.* A little while ago they were in bondage. Now they were free and were traveling to Canaan. Such, even now, is the character of the church.

2. *They were not yet in the land of rest.* In this journeying state of Israel we see the estimate we should still form of the church. She is still in the wilderness ; she is still midway between the house of her bondage and the land of repose.

3. *They believed in the rest which was promised them.* They were journeying to a land they had never seen, and were to reap fields they had never sowed ; to gather fruit from trees they had never planted ; and to dwell in houses they had never builded. So believers journey toward a rest which their Lord has promised them.

4. *They were a people to whom God had spoken good.*

II. HIS ANXIETY THAT OTHERS SHOULD SHARE IN THEIR HAPPINESS.

1. The fervor of his solicitude is seen in its *extent*. The joys of heaven did not prevent its angels from interest in the conversion of one sinner, when of Saul it was said, "Behold, he prayeth." Though Moses had all the care of the twelve tribes, he was yet anxious for his friend, and said to him, "Come with us."

2. His solicitude was *importunate* — Hobab said, "I will not go; but depart to mine own land, and to my kindred." Did Moses give him up then? — No, but he still plead with him, saying, "Leave us not, I pray thee," etc.

3. His solicitude was *courteous and affectionate in its appeal*. In his appeal he urges two considerations. The first was to Hobab's *own personal interest*: "We will do thee good, and it shall be if thou go with us, yea it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do to us, the same will we do unto thee." The second was the *help* he would be in the march. "Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes."

APPLICATION.

1. Believer, prove your appreciation of your emancipation by the readiness with which you journey toward the land of your nobler freedom.

2. Let your heart be greatly humbled by a sense of your great unfruitfulness. To whom have you said, "Come with us"?

3. To those who still walk about Zion, but as yet have never entered into her palaces — never joined in her pilgrim march — to you we say, "Come."

J. KENNADY.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John 10 : 11.

LET us dwell upon several of the things most prominently here brought to view, and first of all, —

CHRIST'S LOVE TO HIS PEOPLE.

The shepherd loves his sheep, if he be worthy of the name. This has been proverbially true everywhere and always. The sheep belong to him ; the sheep follow him ; they know his voice ; they look up to him ; they confide in him. Long association develops this feeling of affection. They have weathered the seasons together ; they have shared the same exposures ; their innocence, their helplessness, their confidence appeal to him. If there is a storm sweeping down, he seeks as speedily as possible, to lead them to some sheltered spot ; and if they shiver in the storm, if they are pelted by its fury, he enters by sympathy into their suffering. If it be a desert place, and water fails, they with parched tongue look unto him, bleating, expecting him to help. If one of them is wounded or sick, its pleading eye appeals to him. And if the wolves howl, or the bears growl, or the lions roar, he plants himself in the path of the ravening beast like David, who risked his own life and slew at one time a lion, at another time a bear, in defense of his flock.

And our Shepherd does not simply risk his life, but sacrifices it. David risked his life, but did not expect to lose it, and he did not lose it. The shepherd faces peril in defense of his flock. A man may do that in defense of any species of property ; may enter a burning house to save a

piece of jewelry ; not that he loves it better than his life, but he does not expect to lose his life. The ordinary shepherd who plants himself between the flock and the ravening beast does indeed incur a risk, but he does not suppose it to be mortal. The good shepherd laid down his life, for he knew what it would cost ; and whose heart has not been touched with tenderest feeling as he has listened to the singing of that beautiful hymn, —

“There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold ;
But one was out on the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold.”

Then you remember the singer represents the shepherd as bringing back the sheep ; his hands, his feet are torn, for he has been over the mountains, he has been through the jungle, and so he bears the traces of the cruel flint and thorn. But O, how far short that comes ! Not merely hands and feet wounded with thorns and flint, but he poured out his soul ; his heart was emptied by a thrust of the spear. There are the foes of the flock, — death and hell. And there lies the shepherd wounded, dead.

This is the first thought ; the love of the shepherd for the sheep ; a love that leads him not only to risk his life ; but to die. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Let me ask you to notice in the second place—

THE INDIVIDUAL RELATION THAT THE SHEPHERD BEARS TO
THE SHEEP.

He calleth his own sheep by name. There is nothing in the Bible more beautiful to me than that same saying. Very precious is that scripture in which it is declared that

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” But this is a wide world, a great world, and what am I? — Just one. Very beautiful is that scripture that says that Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. But what a great thing is the church! It consists of a great multitude that no man can number. Thank God there are so many. And what am I? — Just one—just one. And so I am apt to feel that God loved the world and Christ loved the church, but I am merged in the mass. It is hard for me to realize that he just loves me, even me. It would be a pleasant thing to shelter myself behind that rock, in the shadow of the cross; behind the universal provision that God has made, even if I were not especially thought of when that provision was made; but my gratitude is mightily enhanced when I realize that he loved me. “I saw One hanging on a tree, in agonies and blood; who turned his dying eyes on me.” “Jesus loves me, this I know.” He loves each one of us as though there were but one. The high priest, when he entered the holy place, wore a breast-plate on which precious stones were set, and on each stone was engraved a name. The names of all his saints are borne upon the heart of our High Priest; he knows their names. The Shepherd calleth the sheep by their names. “Mary!” She thought it was the gardener. He looked up and called her name—and her heart was in her throat. O, what joy swelled it when he called her by name! O, it is one thing for the Lord to say, “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” It is another thing for him to say, “Mary, look unto me.” Particularly beautiful is that record. “He loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” You notice, that he loved each one with a particular love; and yet each one was different from

the other two. Mary had her peculiarities, and Martha hers, and Lazarus his ; but he loved each one with a personal love ; and so he loved each one of us before we were born, and made provision personally for each one of us in his death, and all along the track of his providence.

The Lord cares for us with a personal love for each one of us. He calleth each one by his name. My father and mother gave me a name. What name does the Lord know me by ? He gave Peter a new name. I have what they call a Christian name ; may be that is not my name at all. The Lord is represented as giving to each one of those that believe in him a white stone with a new name written on it. What is my name ? What is your name ? Let us rejoice that our names are written in the Lamb's book of life ; a name by which the Lord knows us ; a name by which we are enrolled on high ; a name distinctive ; not accidental, as the name by which we are called here below, but a name that we shall bear forever in the family of God. He loves each one with a personal love, and calls each one of his sheep by name.

PREPARES FOR THEM.

Let me suggest another thought : He not only loves one, but he prepares for each one. How suggestive is that saying, "When he putteth them forth, he goeth before them." Notice : "He putteth them forth." That is one thing, and what a trying thing that is—what a strange thing that is. How snugly they nestle in the fold ; what a shame it seems to be to put them forth, to thrust them forth ; and what a shame it seems to be to thrust a boy forth, to thrust a man forth, and yet of how little account unless they are thrust forth. It is good for them. The Lord putteth them forth. May be they don't want to be put forth ; may be they would rather nestle ; but the eagle

stirreth up her nest and putteth forth her young, that they may try their wings and learn to fly. It is not a good thing for a boy just to be sheltered all the time. It would be better for some boys if they had been orphans early, it is a good thing for them to strike out for themselves.

The Lord puts his people forth sometimes in the very teeth of peril; as you will remember on that occasion when after a sort of picnic over there in Gadara the Lord constrained his disciples to enter into the ship and go over the sea, notwithstanding yonder was a dreadful storm that was coming swooping down upon that same sea. He putteth them forth. And yet when he putteth them forth, he himself goeth before them; for so it is declared in the scripture I have read. "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them." Sometimes he seemeth to follow them, as in the case of the sailors on that storm-swept sea; he cometh after them in the fourth watch of the night; in reality he went before them. And so you remember when he sent two disciples to make preparation for the Passover, and he said unto them, "Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him." They were amazed; everything was ready. The Lord went before them. He sent them apparently before him, but in reality he went before them, and so they found everything ready to their hand. You remember that story you read in your first reader when a school boy, of George Washington being taken into a garden by his father, who showed him a bank of flowers, and his name was spelled out in the flower beds, and his father wanted to know how that came so; and he said, "Father, you must have been here." And just so when we come to find the most beautiful arrangements made for us, we are ready to say, "The Lord has been here." The Lord sent

Paul over yonder into Europe; that vision beckoned him, and he wandered to the river side where the women were holding a prayer meeting. The Lord put him forth, sent him forth, over into Europe, but the Lord got up that prayer meeting. The Lord prepared the heart of Lydia; he put Paul forth, but went before him and opened the door of Lydia's heart; opened opportunities for preaching the gospel. And so have you not found at every step and stage of life's journey, that you have gone forth in weakness, fear, and much trembling, you have been strengthened for each duty? And when there was a sea that you felt could not be crossed, the Lord has gone before you, as with a pillar of fire, and divided the water. The Lord has gone before you and prepared the way, and you have been filled with wonder and delight. You have called the place Bethel, and said, "The Lord was here, and I knew it not."

He not only prepares the way for them, but—

HE PASTURES THEM.

Notice, it is said, they shall go in and out, and find pasture. That does not mean the free-and-easy sort of professor of religion that is on the track and off the track, now in one church, and then in another church, who is here and there and everywhere, and practically nowhere. When the Lord says, "They go in and out," it does not mean that sort of pasture at all; but he means that his people going in and out of the fold, find pasture and a shepherding; it means that there is the largest Christian liberty, the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free. It means that they are not compassed about with severe limitations, but have the widest range and the fullest sweetness and satisfaction. He has given us all things richly to enjoy; he has come

that we may have life, and that we may have it more abundantly. Remember Caleb's daughter, Achsah, who went to her father and begged that she might have some springs of water, for he had given her a south land where little water was to be had ; and he gave her the upper and the nether springs. I have sometimes thought those upper springs meant the higher riches of life ; and the lower all physical, social, domestic enjoyments, all that we call innocent earthly pleasures, in so far as they are not tainted by sin. He has given us the upper and the nether springs. He has given us pastures in the valleys, pasture on the hills. It is all our pasture-ground, and especially the communion of the saints ; especially such communion as we enjoy in the house of God. They find pasture — they find pasture. O what a fool Lot was ! He looked over the valley of the Jordan, and saw that it was well watered, and said that he would take that for his share. But, O how much better pasture up there on the hills in the company of Abraham, if he had only known it. It was ranker for cattle down there, but not so good for feeding the soul.

Above all, he giveth us pasture here, here in this old Book. Here is a broad continent of wealth untold ; and here his people find pasture. Here are valleys where flowers bloom, and where fountains flow with limpid waters ; here are sunny slopes, and here are glorious heights. You notice there is this difference between the material and spiritual ; in the material world the best pasturage, as a rule, is on the river bottom ; down in the low places ; there the herbage is most luxuriant ; but in the spiritual life, the best pasturage is on the highest hills. They go in and out and find pasture. God be thanked for such a Shepherd ! God be thanked for such a pasture ! While we live, let us sing, "The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want." And

when, by and by, we come to the last of life, I trust we shall be able to sing, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

P. S. HENSON.

THE HARVEST IS PAST.

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."
Jer. 8 : 20.

President Dwight says : —

"To understand the meaning of the text it is necessary to bear in mind the state of the people to whom these words were addressed. The Jews were at the time on the verge of destruction. Their temporal prosperity from the first depended or was conditioned on their obedience to God." Thus the Lord said to them by Moses: "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name—the Lord thy God—then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed; and it shall come to pass that as the Lord rejoiced over thee to do thee good, and to multiply thee; so the Lord will rejoice over thee to destroy thee, and to bring thee to nought; and thou shalt be plucked from the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth to the other."

Now the Jews had departed from the law, and were ripe for destruction. "The prophet foresaw that unless God was false to his threatenings, the time for swift judgments was near at hand. Prophets had already warned, threatened,

and entreated them; but it was all of no avail. Infidelity and idolatry had taken complete possession of the nation. Their king, their priests, and their citizens had unitedly turned their backs on Jehovah. They and their children destined to the sword or to slavery in captivity, were still gay, sensual, impure, avaricious, false, and cruel. Not a symptom of reformation appeared to gladden the anxious heart of the man of God." And yet they were all immortal beings; no wonder the prophet said, "O, that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night."

"The time of harvest in Judea was when the neighboring nations usually went out to war — the time when the people were the least able to resist them." The Jews instead of humbling themselves before God, and calling upon him for deliverance from the Chaldeans, turned to the Egyptians, their old masters. This aid the Egyptians promised to give. But while the king of Babylon was pressing the war, they looked and hoped in vain for the promised help. The harvest time came, the summer ended, but no Egyptian army appeared. Wretched people, left in the gloom of an awful despair!

1. This is an appropriate lamentation for every one who remains without salvation to the close of the year.

We are like a boat drifting on the current of the river Niagara. Every year carries us farther from God — farther from deliverance — and nearer to the awful cataract of eternal despair. He who does not become better, becomes worse. The declension is more and more rapid than we infer. No deception is more flattering than this. Every sinner ought to remember at the close of the year that he is nearer death, nearer judgment than ever before. Let

him look around, and he will see that those who have deferred repentance to some future time have been growing harder and harder.

2. Those who have neglected the ordinary means of grace, such as reading the Bible, prayer, repentance, and faith in Christ, and have been expecting some extraordinary event to sweep them into the kingdom of God, still unsaved, may well take up this sad lamentation, "The harvest is past," etc.

The Jews did not repent and turn to God ; but as already stated, looked to Egypt for deliverance. How many there are who, while they believe in religion, in a change of heart, still are waiting for something startling or extraordinary to bring them to God — as some noted preacher or revivalist, a vision or a bed of sickness. So the Jews demanded a sign from Christ himself, but he answered that if one should rise from the dead, they would not believe if they rejected the ordinary means of grace — "If they hear not Moses and the prophets," etc.

3. A person who has passed through a time of religious revival and remains unsaved may well take up this lamentation: "The harvest is past," etc. In different times and places God has graciously visited his people with "reviving showers" — what is commonly called a revival. At such times there is an unusual degree of religious interest. Persons are concerned about their salvation. God's people are quickened; backsliders are reclaimed; sinners are converted to God ; and people flock to the place of prayer. Such a season may well be compared to a harvest ; for harvest —

a. Is a time of great *activity*; the season usually is short; the labor arduous ; and the crop precious.

b. It is a time of *reaping* ; it was preceded by plowing and sowing ; preaching and praying prepared the way for revival.

c. It is a time of *exceeding joy*. “ They joy as in the time of harvest.” [Christ at Jacob’s well — joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth — joy in the Father’s house when the lost son returned.]

4. These words will be peculiarly appropriate to one who dies out of Christ. Life to such an one has been one long summer of opportunity ; it has been a harvest time, and he has reaped for hell and not for heaven. “ O, how all the past looms up before the dying man ! — youth with its hopes and promises ; manhood with its cares, its temptations, its sins, its fading pleasures ; old age with its dreariness, its emptiness, and its awful forebodings.” And now he is dying ; see how he lingers on the brink of despair ; see how the beady drops of anguish stand out upon his pallid brow, listen to the death rattle in his wasted throat ; see, he is trying to speak — hark ! it is his last words ; with an awful effort he whispers : “ The harvest is past, the summer is ended — and I am not saved — I am lost ! lost ! ”

THE SILENCE OF GOD.

“ *And I kept silence.* ” Ps. 50 : 21.

THE silence of God ! Mystic, marvelous theme — it is twice referred to in this sublime psalm. We have the representation of a court of justice ; the *court* is Zion ; the *judge* is Jehovah ; the *witnesses* are the whole earth, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof ; the *guard and executioners* are fire and tempest ; the *summoned delinquents*

are visible saints and corrupt formalists. The one party is arraigned for too great a reliance upon typical services, and exhorted to offerings of praise,—payment of vows and the prayer of faith,—and dismissed with gracious promises if they will return to spiritual service, and a well-ordered life. “Whoso offereth praise,” etc. The other class consists of those who are inwardly corrupt; for although they declare God’s statutes, they consent with the thief, give their mouths to evil, etc. Upon these a terrible sentence is threatened. “Now, consider this,” etc. In the denunciation of the crimes of these sinners our text occurs: “These things hast thou done, and I kept silence.”

1. *We shall Consider God’s Silence as the Effect of his Wonderful Patience.* He is slow to anger. He sees all the evil of sin and the madness of sinners; yet he preserves them in being, and bestows on them his blessings. “The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.” He endures the provocation of the ungodly, and delays from day to day, and from year to year the deserved sentence. *It is thus he extends the opportunities of returning to him.* “Therefore doth the Lord wait that he may be gracious, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.” The present is a season of probation, therefore divine justice does not disturb the order of things. This silence is merciful in the highest degree. We are to account the long-suffering of the Lord salvation. “I will not execute the fierceness of my anger, for I am God, and not man.” It will not last forever, it is in itself prophetic and ominous, like the stillness that is the harbinger of the deadly storm. Thus it was while the ark was preparing. So it was with Sodom. “The sun was risen upon the earth.” So it will be in the day of which these older calamities were figures. The silence of the ages will be broken.

“ Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence,” etc. The period is certain ; it is rapidly approaching, it will be exceedingly majestic,— of universal concern. Meanwhile the patience of God is fearfully abused. Sin extracts poison even from the divine perfections. Eccl. 8 : 11.

2. *There is a Silence of God which is a Judicial Infliction.* The wretched Saul, having despised all divine warnings, betakes himself to the prophet with the complaint, “ God is departed from me, and answereth me no more.” Men trifle with convictions of conscience, despise God’s providence and God’s word. They pass through a series of conditions. Indifference, boldness in sin, hardness of heart, and final impenitence is preceded by the appalling sentence, “ Ephraim is joined to his idols. Let him alone.”

Herod had been an eager listener to John. He had done many things, but he had not surrendered his heart; and till he has done that, no man surrenders his sins. The time comes when rather than slay his accursed lusts, he will slay the prophet. The blood of the saint is upon his conscience; but at length he loses the terror of seeing John, and would see Jesus. Once more he is glad. What a meeting! Many questions are put. “ But he answered him nothing,” — nothing to satisfy his curiosity; nothing to alarm his fears; nothing to enlighten his mind. This was the eloquence of silence indeed. “ Be not thou silent unto me, O God: lest I become like those that go down into the pit.” Anything is better than silence. Let conscience wither and torture, its worst agonies are blessedness in comparison with this. It is wise to watch the operations of this inward monitor.

When did it last admonish you? How was it received? “ Turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out of my spirit upon you. I will make known my words unto you ”

3. *There is a Silence of God which is the Appointment of His Infinite Wisdom.*—In some respects he does not keep silence. Creation is full of eloquence. Providence is a kind and faithful teacher of his goodness, wisdom, power, and grace. Revelation is his testimony. Largely and lovingly has he therein spoken and yet speaks. Respecting much, however, he has kept silence. The Bible contains enough to constitute it a safe guide to heaven, and this is its design. “Secret things belong to God.” We are yet in *our infancy*; we are *finite* creatures. If we are true inquirers after light, we shall presently be raised to a higher sphere. Till then our wisdom is to acquiesce in the appointments of the Eternal Mind, and walk in the light which he has given us.

4. *There is a Silence of God which is a Temporary Discipline exercised for his People's Good.* For a time he suspends his gracious manifestations. No glittering of the *Urim* and *Thummim* announces an oracle. This is but to quicken our spirits and awaken our cries. In some respects we are called to imitate God's silence. *By holy awe and reverence* of his grandeur. “Be silent, all flesh, before God.” *By submission* to his mysterious dispensations. “Aaron held his peace.” “I was dumb with silence.” *By meek endurance of provocation.* “He was reviled, but he reviled not again.” *By contemplative preparation for praise and worship.* “There was silence in heaven.”

PREACHER'S PORTFOLIO.

TITLE EXAMINED.

"Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7: 22, 23.

Who can tell the disappointment of those who have gone to judgment expecting a welcome among the blessed when they receive the sentence from the Judge, "I never knew you: depart from me!" Let me urge upon you the importance of a thorough examination of your hope, or title to heaven.

1. We should do this, because it is a matter of faith, and not of sight. It is wholly a matter of faith—we speak of a clear title as the "assurance of faith." The title to your home can be read at any time, and its genuineness ascertained; your title to heaven is beyond the reach of the bodily senses, and the evidences vary with your faith.

2. We should do this, because it is often difficult to distinguish between a movement of the animal feelings and true religious affections and impulses. Emotions come and go, like waves of the sea. We want a title that is unmoved by sorrows; that neither floods nor flames can destroy.

3. We should do this, because we are in danger of being satisfied with the existing standard of religion in the community where we live. The standard of piety in most places, is very low.

4. We should do this, because a deceived soul is a constant dead weight in a church.

5. We should do this, because God will be thorough

with us at the judgment, no matter how careless we may be here.

6. We should do this, because many professing Christians, even ministers of the gospel, have actually found themselves deceived, after having been members of the church for years

To assist you in making this examination, I will answer as well as I am able, the question, What ought to satisfy me that I am a Christian : —

1. A full surrender to God. As the will is the seat of rebellion against God, this stronghold is the most obstinately defended and the very last to be surrendered.

2. The removal of a burden of sin suddenly or gradually. The burden of conviction for sin varies greatly with different individuals; yet when conversion takes place, the burden is always removed. If your burden is gone, and you feel that some love to God and his people has taken its place, you have an evidence of a change of heart, no matter though you cannot tell the time of the change.

3. A new feeling of love to Christians and to Jesus. This is one of the best evidences, and almost the first change the renewed soul discovers. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

4. A new relish for the word of God. All true conversions are followed by a new love for the Scriptures. It is no longer a gloomy book. He exclaims, "O how I love thy law! It is my meditation day and night."

5. Pleasure in secret prayer, at least at times. This is a good evidence of a change of heart. "Behold he prayeth," is one of the first signs of spiritual life; a renewed soul will pray. I think no unregenerated person ever enjoyed secret prayer for a single hour.

6. Sin or sinful thoughts will cause pain. Unholy thoughts are often thrown into the minds of even the most devoted Christians. But there is no sin in them unless they are cherished. Jesus had such thoughts thrown into his mind, but the thought was instantly hurled back upon Satan, its author.

7. Desire and effort for the salvation of others. The natural impulse of the "new man" is to lead others to his Saviour. This was Andrew's first impulse after his conversion. "He findeth his own brother Simon," — he brought him to Jesus.

8. A desire to obey Christ in his commands and ordinances. Our Master says: "If a man love me, he will keep my words." That means, I suppose, he will desire so to do, and will actually obey those commands so far as he understands them and has opportunity.

9. Deep humility and self abasement. This must have a prominent place among the evidences of conversion. The Lord Jesus "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant," and "if a man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

10. A growing desire to be holy and like Christ. This is the crowning evidence of all. The renewed man desires likeness to Jesus above all things else.

Finally: Do not expect all these evidences to be found in active exercise at the same time. And even though you may, for a time, seem to be confined to one, remember that a renewed heart is just as necessary for the production of that one as for all. The tree and the usual operations of nature, are as essential to give a single specimen of ripe fruit as to load our garners.

A. B. EARLE.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH CHRIST?

"What shall I do, then, with Jesus which is called Christ?" Matt. 27 : 22.

THIS is the most important question any man can consider. If we do the right thing with Jesus, we get everything that is worth having for time and for eternity. If we do the wrong thing with Jesus, we lose everything that is worth having for time and for eternity.

I. WHAT DEPENDS UPON WHAT WE DO WITH JESUS.

1. *Our Acceptance or Rejection before God Depends upon What we Do with Christ. John 3 : 18.*—If we accept Jesus Christ, God will accept us; if we reject him, God will reject us. Our acceptance before God does not depend upon the lives we have lived, upon our character, upon any religious ceremonies we may perform, but solely upon what we do with Christ. The vilest sinner that accepts Christ, God will accept. The most moral and upright man that rejects Christ, God will reject. The moment a man accepts Christ that moment he is "justified from all things." Acts 13 : 39.

2. *Our Becoming Sons of God, or Becoming Children of the Devil Depends Solely upon What we Do with Christ.*—"To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Not by doing good, not by living purely, not by reading the Bible, not by praying, but by "receiving him," we become the sons of God.

3. *Our Having Peace Depends Solely upon What we Do with Christ.*—"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5 : 1. We cannot get peace by prayer or penances. The most bur-

dened conscience can get it by simple faith. *Illustrate* by Martin Luther seeking by vigils, penances, austerities, and Luther seeking peace and finding it at last by simple faith in the crucified Saviour.

4. *Our Having Joy Depends Solely upon What we Do with Christ.*—“*In whom believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*” 1 Peter 1: 8. Our true joy does not depend upon our circumstances, but simply upon our faith in Christ.

5. *Our Having Eternal Life Depends Solely upon What we Do with Christ.*—“*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life.*” John 3: 36. Not upon our struggles, not upon our victories over sin, not upon our wrestlings in prayer,—upon nothing but our believing Christ depends our getting eternal life.

II. WHAT WE MUST DO WITH CHRIST.

We must do something with Jesus. We have him on our hands. Pilate tried to get Jesus off his hands and could not; neither can we.

1. *We must accept him or reject him.* Every one that does not accept him, by that act rejects him.

2. *We must let him into our hearts or shut him out.* Rev. 3: 20.

3. *We must confess him or deny him.* Matt. 10: 32, 33.

4. *We must take our stand for him or against him.* Matt. 12: 30.

III. CONSIDER WHO IT IS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SOMETHING TO DO.

1. *He is our Divinely Appointed and Divinely Anointed King.* Acts 2: 36.—If we reject him, shut out the King,

we reject and shut out the divinely appointed and divinely anointed King.

2. *He is the Son of God.*—Many deny this; but denying a fact does not alter the fact. He is proven to be the Son of God by five divine, unquestionable testimonies,—by the testimony of the divine life he lived; by the testimony of the divine words he spoke; by the testimony of the divine works he wrought; by the testimony of his divine influence upon the whole subsequent history of man; and by the divine attestation of his resurrection from the dead.

He is the Son of God. If we reject him, we reject the Son of God; if we shut him out, we shut the Son of God out; if we deny him, we deny the Son of God; if we take our stand against him, we take our stand against the Son of God. This is the awful, damning sin that lies at the door of every man, no matter how upright, who rejects Jesus Christ.

3. *He is Your Saviour.*—*Isa. 53: 5, 6.*—If you reject him, you reject the One who “was wounded for your transgressions,” etc.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS? You must do something with him to-night. If you do not accept him, you reject him. Think how much depends upon what you do with him. Sum up. Think who he is. What will you decide?

R. A. TORREY.

SINS BLOTTED OUT AND FORGOTTEN.

"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isa. 43 : 25.

It is a custom with jewellers in setting precious gems to place them upon a dark background in order that the brilliancy of the beautiful stones may be brought out by contrast. In the same way God puts the beautiful rainbow upon the background of a dark and stormy sky. So in grace, the mercy of the Almighty is placed over against the background of our sinful lives. We have an example in this chapter. The sins of God's ancient people is the dark background. Listen: "But thou hast not called upon me O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings, neither hast thou honored me with thy sacrifices; thou hast brought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices, but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins; thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." This is the dark background, and upon it God places this gem of divine grace to shine and sparkle and fill our souls with wonder and love at its beauty and glory, — "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

The two precious words in this text are *forget* and *forgive*. This is the good news of the gospel — news that seems too good to be true. God not only forgives but forgets my sins. Can the Eternal Mind cast out of itself a subject of knowledge? Can Infinite Wisdom cease to remember anything. With man it would seem to be impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Let us look at what is implied in God's forgetting our sins,— “And will not remember thy sins.”

1. No record is kept of sins forgiven. Those who are familiar with poetry and fiction will recall allusions to the angel ever recording the evil deeds of men. There is that thought in every man's conscience which finds expression in these representations. The truth which they embody is the omniscience of God. We feel that he takes cognizance of every word and thought and deed. And yet he declares, “I will remember them no more.”

2. No responsibility for past sin is left on the believer. As a pardoned soul he is absolutely insulated from the past. He stands from the hour of conversion a forgiven, a saved, a regenerated, a new man. “Old things have passed away, and behold all things have become new.”

3. No account is ever to be rendered of them at the judgment. So we rise to a climax: No responsibility rests on the sinner for that which has been forgiven; no account for such sins is ever to be rendered. It is pardon now and pardon forever. “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” They will never be judged for their sins. But does not Paul say, “We must all appear at the judgment seat of Christ”? True; the believer will appear there, not to be judged for his sins, but for his *works*—“that every man may receive as his works shall be.”

“A gentleman while crossing the Bay of Biscay, became exceedingly alarmed and anxious as he beheld what he thought was an approaching hurricane or tornado. He trembled and addressed himself to one of the experienced sailors: ‘Do you think she will be able to live through it?’ ‘Through what?’ inquired the man. ‘Through that fast approaching storm!’ The old sailor smiled and said: ‘Sir, you need not be alarmed; that storm will never

touch us, it has passed already.' So in regard to the believer; judgment, so far as sin is concerned, is past already. He has been tried, condemned, and executed in the person of his surety, Jesus Christ."

4. The record that was written has been blotted out. A well known writer speaks of "the accusing spirit who flew up to heaven's court with Peter's oath, blushing as he gave it in, and the recording angel dropped a tear upon the page and blotted it out forever." That is a poet's fancy, but this is God's truth,—“blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, nailing it to His cross.” The great truth of a vicarious atonement is the warrant for this act of forgetful pardon. “He who knew no sin was made sin *for us*.” On him was poured the vials of wrath that are yet to be poured upon the ungodly and unbelieving. It is said that in a school in Ireland a boy was asked, “Is there anything, my boy, that God cannot do?” “Yes, sir,” said the lad, “there is one thing.” “What is that asked the, questioner in surprise. “He cannot see my sins when they are blotted out by Jesus’ blood.” And the boy was right. “He will see no perverseness in Israel and no iniquity in Jacob.”

HOW TO BE DELIVERED FROM SIN.

“Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Offer unto God the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.” Ps. 4: 4, 5.

HERE are four steppingstones across the filthy slough of sin; may you mark them well, and step from one to the other by the help of God's Spirit, till you reach the other shore and stand on safe and clean ground.

1. *First, Feel Reverent Awe.*—"Stand in awe." Tremble, and sin not. Gracious work in the heart begins with trembling. The old house of nature shakes before it comes down. The prodigal must feel, "I am not worthy to be called a son." He seeks an injured father's face with trembling.

Remember *there is a God*; that *God is present at all times*; that *God is your judge*; that he is the *Almighty*; that he is *infinitely good*.

2. *Practice Thoughtful Self-examination.*—"Commune with **your** own heart upon your bed, and be still." Think about yourself. Especially think about the state of your heart. Think about yourself alone, alone in quiet. O how I wish you would spend an hour or two closeted with yourself. Choose the hour of night, when all is still around you, and the darkness lends its solemnity. Make your bed the place of your contrition. If you are unsaved, think rather than sleep. Men try to forget, and to go to sleep. Sleep, if you like, in a house on fire; sleep, if you like, in a ship that is settling down, and rapidly sinking; but I charge you, do not sleep while you are unforgiven, and your soul is nearing eternal woe. I remember when I could not sleep, for fear I might wake up in hell. Many under conviction of sin have resolved not to sleep until they found Christ.

Keep on thinking *till you come to be still*. Do you know what that means? There comes a time when to a seeking soul all grows quiet. The old desires are hushed, and there is silence, and nothing is heard save "the still small voice" of God.

3. *Approach unto God Aright.*—"Offer the sacrifices of righteousness." Come to God; come to God in his own way; come as Israel came to the tabernacle in the wilderness, bringing their sacrifices with them.

When they brought their sacrifices, the first thing they did was to lay their hands on the victim's head, and *make a confession of sin*. Come, then, with broken and contrite hearts unto the Lord. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." Do not cloak or excuse your sin. Get to your chamber, and tell the Lord what you have done.

Go also to the Lord with a gracious desire to be rid of your sins. Entreat reconciliation, saying, "I would no longer be what I have been." "O that I may sin no more."

The main thing, however, is to bring unto the Lord *the offering which he has divinely appointed and provided*. You know what that is. Come to God by faith in Jesus Christ. There is only one Mediator between you and God — "the man Christ Jesus."

4. *And then Exercise Faith*.—"Put your trust in the Lord." In whom should a man trust but in his God? *Trust him as willing to receive you*, to forgive you, to accept you, and to bless you. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

Trust him, especially *as he reveals himself in the person of Jesus Christ his Son*. In him you see love written in capital letters. By his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion, by his precious death and burial, by his glorious resurrection and ascension, I entreat you to trust the Son of God, who once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Trust the Lord *that by the works of his Holy Spirit he can renew you*. Trust the Lord *for everything*. "The just shall live by faith."

C. H. SPURGEON.

THE PASSOVER.

(Read Exodus 12 : 1-14.)

“For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.” 1 Cor. 5 : 7.

I. THE ANIMAL SELECTED WAS TYPICAL.

1. A lamb, harmless, gentle, patient.

2. Without blemish. Christ was sinless, etc.

3. It was to be set apart four days — that is, it was to be selected on the tenth day and killed on the fourteenth. Christ was proclaimed in types and shadows for 4000 years, suffered in the fourth year of his ministry, and made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem four days before he was crucified.

4. It was to be killed, and the flesh was to be roasted with fire. Fire is the emblem of divine wrath. On the cross Jesus was the sacrifice; his divinity was the altar; and the fire from heaven consumed his humanity.

5. It was to be killed between the two evenings — between three and six o'clock — and Jesus died at the ninth hour, or three o'clock.

6. Not a bone was to be broken. And not a bone of our Lord's precious body was broken. John 19 : 32-36.

II. THE BLOOD WAS TYPICAL.

1. It had to be applied — sprinkled on the door-posts, denoting an open reception and profession of Christ. It was not to be sprinkled on the threshold — the blood of the Son of God is so precious in God's sight that it must not be trodden on even in symbol.

2. It was to be the means of preservation. “When I see the blood, I will pass over.” Sheltered behind the

blood, the sinner is safe. It is *position* and not *character* that saves.

“When I see the blood.” O has it been applied in your case? There is an old Jewish legend that on the night of the exodus from Egypt a young maiden, “the first born of the family,” was dangerously ill. As the midnight hour approached, she anxiously inquired, “Father, are you sure that the blood is on the door-posts?” “Yes, my child,” he answered, “I ordered it done, and the servant always obeys.” It lacked at length but a few minutes of midnight, and once more the sick girl started up from her uneasy sleep, and asked, “Are you *sure* that the blood is there?” The same answer was returned, but she remained distressed. At last the father lifted her in his arms and taking a light, carried her to the door to see for herself, *and, lo! the blood was not there.* Hastily the father killed a lamb and with his own hand applied the blood. O hearer, are you sure the blood has been applied?

III. THE EATING WAS TYPICAL.

1. It was to be eaten. “And they shall eat the flesh.” Jesus said, “Except a man eat my flesh, and drink my blood, he hath no part in me.”

2. The whole of the lamb was to be eaten. We must feed upon a whole Christ,—Christ in his entirety, Christ and his yoke, Christ and his cross, as well as Christ and his crown.

3. It was to be eaten with bitter herbs. They were to remember the bitter bondage of Egypt. If sin be bitter to us, Christ will be correspondingly sweet.

4. It was to be an “ordinance forever.” As long as we live, we must continue in Christ and feed upon the Lamb.

THE HOLY FLOCK.

“ Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them ; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts.”
Eze. 36 : 37, 38.

Two things commonly lead to prayer : first some desirableness in the object ; and secondly, some expectation of being heard. Accordingly, the text, under a striking figure, holds forth a desirable object, and excites the confidence that God will entertain our petition.

It is agreeable to the divine will, and analogous to the economy of grace, that great enlargement should be granted to the church, at favored seasons.

Such increase of the church is desirable because it glorifies God ; because it is the very end for which Christ died ; because it is the method in which God has raised his church to its most remarkable prosperity.

1. *It is by just such Extension of the Church that God has Chosen to Glorify his Name.*—The world stands for the sake of the church, and the church stands to glorify God, “ of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things.”

2. *It is the very End for which Christ Accomplished the Plan of Redemption.*—This ingathering of souls is the covenant recompense of our Redeemer. “ When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.”

3. *It is by a Rapid Ingathering of Many Souls that God has Heretofore Condescended to Elevate his Church to its Highest Prosperity.*—This has been repeatedly the case, as

on the day of Pentecost. During the first two centuries the increase of the church was by the rapid accession of great numbers, rather than by the gradual adding of a few at a time, after long intervals.

It was so in the thirteenth century, when the evangelical servants of God increased so mightily that in Bohemia alone there were, in 1315, no less than eighty thousand of these witnesses for the truth. It was so in the fourteenth century under the labors of Wycliffe, in the fifteenth century, under Huss and Jerome of Prague. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was simply a great revival of religion in which God increased his people like a flock.

4. *It is just such an Extension of the Church which is Demanded at the Present Time in Our Own Land.*—We are not straitened in God; but we are straitened in our desires and our believings. We have not, because we ask not. When united prayer begins, revival is not merely coming—it has come.

J. W. ALEXANDER.

THE THREE SALVATIONS.

“But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved.” Eph. 2: 4, 5.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.” Phil. 2: 12, 13.

“Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” Rom. 13: 11.

THERE is a *past*, a *present*, and a *future* tense when we conjugate the word “saved.” The believer has been saved, is being saved, and is to be saved. So there is a sense in which I can answer the question, “Are you saved?”—

“Yes I am !” or “I shall be,” or “I am being saved.” Salvation is referred to in these three tenses, in these three texts. “Ye are saved;” “Work out your salvation;” “Our salvation is nearer,” etc.

Salvation means deliverance—deliverance from some kind of danger or evil. In the first text it means deliverance from the *guilt of sin*; in the second from the *power of sin*; and in the third from the *penalty of sin*. These three deliverances include pardon, sanctification, and glorification. Pardon does not include sanctification, nor do these two include the third. Each blessing is distinct from the others.

We are not to rest content with the first, as we are too apt to do. Are you saved?—“Yes!” Aye, but from what?—“From guilt.” Well thank God for that, but are you working for the second, for deliverance from the thrall, the bondage of sin? Are you saved from evil, sinful tempers, habits, dispositions, etc.? Let us examine more carefully these three salvations.

1. *The Deliverance from Guilt.*—Here we are met by the awful fact that we are by nature and practice sinners in the sight of a just and Holy God. We have broken his righteous laws. “We were dead in sins”—under sentence of death. “But God who is rich in *mercy*, for his great love hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved.” “Not by works”—that is, ours—but by the work of Christ in its consummation on the cross. O man! O woman! unsaved, full of guilt! thy works for deliverance here will not avail. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” To the penitent one Jesus said, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” In that sense, O child of God, thou hast already been saved.

But Jesus added, "Go, and sin no more." Ah, this is the testing, trying command; this calls for effort, for strenuous and persistent exertion. And this brings us to the thought in the second text, namely,—

2. *Deliverance from the Power of Sin.*—When we were saved from guilt, were pardoned, a new principle, a new nature was implanted, but the old sinful nature remained. Then began the struggle for deliverance from the power and dominion of sin. The prodigal when he came home, received pardon, and a new robe, but he still had old habits, old temptations, etc. His father would help him to overcome these, but he had to help himself.

The text describes the process of this deliverance. It is one of works—the united works of God and the believer. "Work out your own salvation, for it is God who worketh in you." What a worker God is! He works in two realms; in nature and in human hearts. He is the Great Artificer. Man in his best and greatest efforts follows the divine director.

After conversion we stand appalled at the sinfulness of our natural hearts, are oftentimes tempted to despair, but what can we not accomplish when working in concert and harmony with such an almighty being as God! "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

Notice what God does: "He works in us both to *will* and to *do*;" that is, when he puts in our hearts the desire and resolve to overcome temptation, he also works in us the power."

"I was saved!" O do not rest content with that past tense—that past deliverance from guilt. "He wills that I should holy be, what can withstand his will?"

3. *And What of the Hereafter?*—"It doth not yet appear." "We shall be like him." "He shall change these

vile bodies." "When he shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation." In Phil. 8 : 11 Paul tells us how he suffered loss, "if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" — that is of the righteous dead. Then shall the body be delivered — "Then shall be brought to pass the saying," and not till then, "death is swallowed up in victory." There is to be a final and glorious deliverance from the power of death and the grave, and this deliverance, this salvation, "is nearer than when we first believed."

F. B. MEYER.

CONFESSING CHRIST.

Matt 10 : 32

THE text is greatly emphasized by the circumstances of its utterance.

1. *The Object to be Confessed.*

- a. Not our good works, church membership, or worthy desires and purposes.
- b. Not some remarkable experience.
- c. But Christ as our Saviour and King, our trust in him for pardon, and our obedience to him as our Law-giver.

2. *To Whom the Confession is to be Made.*

- a. To Christ — the heart.
- b. To men — "before men." Rom. 10 : 9, 10. Do not hesitate from any cause. Remember,
 - a. Christ requires it.
 - b. He knows all about you.
 - c. He wants to use your confession.

3. *The Manner of Confessing.*

a. By words; "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

b. By acts; the ordinances and an upright life.

4. *The Promise to those Confessing.*

They shall be confessed before the Father.

a. Confessed now, which means forgiveness, reconciliation, and unspeakably rich blessings in the life that now is.

b. Confessed hereafter; received into glory; welcomed by the King in his beauty; "Come ye blessed of my Father."

How simple the requirement, how wonderful the reward!

J. W. CONLEY.

CONFESSION ESSENTIAL.

"Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God" Luke 12 : 8.

WE are in danger just now from a very bad definition of Christianity. The disposition to eliminate divinely imposed duties by naming them "non-essentials" threatens to so far emasculate our religion as to leave it little else than a free ticket to heaven. Sir Henry Drummond relates that a certain cynic gave this definition of a Christian : "He is a man whose great aim in life is a selfish desire to save his own soul ; who in order to do that, goes regularly to church ; and whose supreme desire is to get to heaven when he dies." The definition seems to Sir Henry as faulty as that given by one of Prof. Huxley's students. In answer to the ques-

tion, "What is a lobster?" one replied: "A lobster is a red fish that moves backwards." The examiner only noted three objections to the answer: "A lobster is not a fish, is not red, and does not move backwards." The religion that asks, "What can I neglect and yet get into heaven?" is not Christianity. Jesus Christ did not deal in "non-essentials." What he plainly commands, the true Christian heart does not question. To ask, "Can't I get into heaven without confessing Christ?" is to admit the cowardice that would climb up by some other way than that of Scripture. The soul that really loves Christ, would find silence about that affection, a continual sorrow.

A REASONABLE REQUIREMENT.

There is in this text a reasonable requirement. It is like Jesus Christ to ask men to do what they ought to do without the asking.

1. *To Confess the Truth; namely, that Jesus Saves.*—No man has any moral or legal right to withhold a fact that would effect the public good. Civil courts demand of witnesses "the truth, and the whole truth." Medical colleges graduate their students under a promise to make known any discovery in "*materia medica*" that would bless mankind. Great explorers, scientists, and philosophers have felt under moral obligation to make known their discoveries. Witness Columbus, Galileo, and Bacon. Shall Andrew be silent, then, about his greater discovery so long as Peter is in ignorance of Christ's advent? No such another blessed truth as this was ever announced, — "We have found the Messiah."

2. *The Demand is Reasonable, Because the Profession is Natural.*—Nothing is so apt to open a man's lips as the discovery of some great good. It was so dangerous in

Jesus' day to confess him that he advised silence on the part of some whom he had healed. But joyful nature despised counsel and discretion and "published it the more." Silence would have seemed "the sin of sins" to the man healed at the beautiful gate.

3. *Nothing Short of such a Profession Sufficiently Honors Christ.*—Love delights to honor its object! The brother who never speaks a sweet sister's name is unworthy her pure affection. A husband who keeps an unbroken silence about his wife is almost ready to enter the divorce courts. Nine of the ten lepers Jesus healed hurt the Saviour's heart because they came not back to give glory to God. His question, "But where are the nine?" is pathetic in the extreme! Shall he feel it less if the soul, healed of the leprosy of sin, skulks away in silence?

A NECESSARY AND ESSENTIAL ACT.

This confession of Christ is also a necessary and essential act.

1. *It is Essential to One's own Safety.*—The saved soul is not yet a sanctified spirit. There is many an enemy between the cross and the crown. Sam Small would most certainly have returned to his cups on the morning after the gospel had reached his heart, but for the profession he had made in the public square of Atlanta on the evening before. Jesus knew how to prevent devils from a repossession of their subject, and so he said to the dispossessed Gadarene, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee."

2. *Again, such a Profession is Essential to Christian Influence.*—There may be secret disciples who shall slip into heaven by the hardest; but they will enter empty handed. Secret disciples are not soul-winners. It is not recorded of

any Nicodemus, "He findeth first his own brother . . . and brought him to Jesus." Secret disciples often instruct in Sunday-school. A soul is seldom saved out of their classes. You can't send souls to the Saviour. You must do as Philip did,—go first yourself, and then say to the Nathaniels, "Come and see."

3. *This Profession is Necessary to the Organized Life of our Lord's Religion.*—Secret discipleship is the nihilism of churchianity. If one has a right to be a secret disciple, then all have. In that case what of the church—the bride—with all her blessed moral, educational, missionary and evangelistic enterprizes and potencies? Satan and his emissaries are not much annoyed by that discipleship which knows no organization of forces, and undertakes nothing in the name of Christ. Such Christianity would never molest one devil's den, nor send the gospel to one perishing pagan.

AN ABSOLUTE DEMAND.

Jesus' demand in this matter is absolute. He does not mince his words.

1. *The Language is Definite.*—Ingersoll in discussing the subject of sects, has said, "It is to be regretted that your Deity did not express himself more clearly" in doctrinal matters. The doughty Colonel will hardly excuse himself from a public profession of Christ on the plea that "God's demand was indefinite." Until language shall cease to convey thought, we will be in little doubt as to the meaning of this scripture.

2. *The Demand is Strengthened by Repetition.*—See Matt. 10:28-38; Mark 8:38; and Rom. 10:8-11. A profound sensation was produced in the noon-day meeting in Boston when a small Norwegian boy rose, and despite his fright,

faltered out, "If I tell the world about Jesus, then Jesus will tell the Father about me."

3. *The Demand is Unconditional.*— Christ knew it was a test of love, and so left it as an absolute requirement. He suggested no exceptions. He doubtless reckoned it not unreasonable to ask the subjects of his grace to profess him before their fellows! If, with all your vocal organs in perfect order, you cannot sepak for him who labored, suffered, dared, and died for you, you would better decide you don't know him, and seek his love. W. B. RILEY.

DIFFICULTIES WHICH PREVENT MANY FROM JOINING A CHURCH.

Acts 2: 47.

THERE are some apparent difficulties which prevent many from joining the church. It is a great mistake to allow any of these to stand in your way, as a short examination in the light of God's word will prove. They are of two general kinds:—

I. THOSE WHICH RELATE TO THE CHURCH.

Some of these are,

1. "*The church is not perfect.*" Christ never said it was, or would be in this world, but rather "Let both [the good and the bad] grow together until the harvest." Matt. 13: 30. The church would hardly be perfect if you were the only member, would it? If there is bad company in the church, there is worse and more of it outside. If the church is not what it ought to be, and you are so much bet-

ter, it is your duty to go in and help transform it. If you are a Christian, this is for you : "Let your light so shine." Are you doing that ? (See Matt. 5 : 13-16.) It is unfair to judge the church by her poorest members, and the world by its best adherents. "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." John 7 : 24.

2. "*There are so many denominations.*" This is not to trouble you, since it did not trouble Christ. He established none, he forbade none, though he did condemn the sins of individuals and sects. This is, then, a matter of minor importance. Join the church which presents to you the best system, the highest worship, and the most of Christ and his truth; and be loyal to the Master and people. Remember that Christ put the whole matter on a higher plane when he said, "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Matt. 23 : 8.

3. "*I may bring dishonor on the church and the name of Christ.*" You surely will by not joining, if you are a Christian; for then you will be disobeying him. Christ will take care of all that if you will let him take care of you. He knows how weak you are when he takes you into his care. If *he* is not afraid, *you* ought not to be. He has the most to lose, and you the most to gain in the bargain. He will perfect his church and you in it, if you will let him. "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Eph. 5 : 25-27. The question is not, What will become of the church if you join ? but rather, What will become of you if you do not ? It may be, "Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7 : 23. You must be in the church to be known and acknowledged as a Christian.

II. THOSE WHICH RELATE TO SELF.

1. "*I can live a good life outside of the church.*" That may suit you, but it will never please Christ. Besides, if you do live a good life, taking God's estimate, which you must, you will do what no one has yet done, and you will have a harder task than the church life can possibly be. If your own goodness is all you are seeking, you are very easily satisfied. Listen to what God says through his prophet, of such attempts: "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isa. 54: 6. The Bible teaches that the glory of God, not of self, is the chief end of man." "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; whether we die, we die unto the Lord." Rom. 14: 8. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10: 31. Morality may suit man, only Christianity will please God.

2. "*I may regret it if I join.*" Regret being with Christ and his people? The lily might sooner regret being in the garden and having the care of the gardener. The child might sooner regret being in the family, and having the care of the father and mother, and the influence of brothers and sisters. You will regret it if you do not join. "Who-soever shall be ashamed of me and my words . . . of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." Luke 9: 26.

3. "*I have no experience.*" That is exactly the condition of heart that God wants, — empty that he may fill you. No experience is needed for a beginning. The church is the place in which to get experience. When Christ called his disciples, it was that he might "*make them*" fishers of men, not because they were already fitted. He said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Matt. 4: 19.

The preparation came after they began to follow him. If you are not fit for Christ's service, then it is your duty to come to the church and be fitted. It is God's great school. To every believer he says, "Come and learn of me." Matt. 11 : 29.

JOHN L. LEE.

THE FORGOTTEN VOW.

"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there."
Gen. 35: 1-3.

I WISH to notice four things in connection with this text:—

I. THE VOW MADE.

1. You will remember that Jacob, by fraud and lying, obtained the blessing from his father which belonged to his brother Esau. It was but natural that the elder brother should be angry when he found out the deception that had been practiced. Jacob had to fly from home, and, acting on the advice of his mother, he departed for the land of Haran.

2. At the end of the first day's journey, Jacob found himself near the city called by the inhabitants Luz. Tired and wearied with travel, he laid him down to sleep in the open field, with a stone for a pillow and the vault of heaven for a covering. In that sleep he dreamed he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. He saw, moreover, that which filled his soul with awe and reverence, for, behold ! the Lord stood above the ladder, and, looking down on the sleeping pilgrim, said, "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land

whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

3. Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." And Jacob vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

That was Jacob's vow.

II. THE VOW FORGOTTEN.

1. Let us follow the history of Jacob. He leaves Bethel, and journeys to Haran. He meets Laban, and serves him for more than twenty years. For this service Laban gives him his two daughters in marriage and a part of his flock. At the end of that time Jacob leaves Laban, and sets out to return to the land of his fathers. Laban pursues, and overtakes him in Gilead. He is, however, pacified, and withdraws. Jacob moves on again — crosses the ford Jabbok. He here wrestles with the angel, and his name is changed to Israel. After this he meets Esau, and finds means to assuage his anger. Esau goes back to Luz, and Jacob journeys to Succoth. Then he passes on to

Shalem where he lingers until seven or eight years have passed away.

2. See how Bethel is neglected, and the vow made there is forgotten. Twenty-eight years ago Jacob said unto the Lord: "If thou wilt be with me, and keep me," etc. Gen. 28: 21, 22.

3. Jacob, you observe only asked for three things,—(1) the Lord's presence; (2) bread to eat; (3) raiment to put on. Yet how much more had God graciously bestowed, and still the vow had not been performed. Jacob had not gone to Bethel; had not visited the house of God; had not given the tenth of all he had unto the Lord.

Jacob had forgotten his vow.

4. Are any of us in Jacob's plight? Yes; it is the old, old story of Jacob repeated in every-day life.

a. Don't you remember the vow you made to God six or seven years ago? Times were very bad then; as you walked abroad, you saw numbers brought down even to the very gates of death. You took up the newspaper and read: "Another death from starvation," and you feared lest the gaunt skeleton of famine might touch you. "Another death from cholera," and you trembled lest the pestilence should sweep you down; and then you fell upon your knees, and prayed very much in the same way as Jacob did: "If thou wilt only give me what I need, Father, I will indeed serve thee; and when prosperity comes back, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

b. Prosperity came, and her sun is shining on you now. You have had more than your bread, and more than your raiment. You have been saved from the pestilence. *Have you performed your vow?* Are you serving the Lord? Do you give a tenth of all you possess to him?

c. Don't you remember another season when you made

a vow unto the Lord ? Ten years ago your business affairs seemed to be all going wrong ; do what you would, it seemed as though nothing would come right. And you looked up and said, “ Lord, if thou wilt bring me out of ⁴his fix, I will serve thee.”

d. And the Lord heard you, and answered you. He did prosper you ; he is prospering you now. How about the vow ? has it been paid ?

e. And do you not remember, too, that time of *sickness* ?

f. Recall that last night in the old year. You were at the midnight service ; it was a solemn time. There in the quiet, on your knees, what did you say to God ? Were not the words something like these : “ I will live nearer to thee, O Lord. There shall not be so many foul blots upon the page this year. I will try and win souls for thee.” And then the new year came, and you sang :—

“Come let us anew our journey pursue ;
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.”

For a week or two, perhaps a month or two, all went well, *but how is it now ?* How now ? Have not the past nine months been months of broken vows—unfulfilled promises ? Where is the evidence that you are living nearer to God ? Where is the family altar ? Where are the souls you have been the means of leading to the cross ? WHERE ?

g. Once more, let your thoughts run back to that church meeting when you received the right hand of Christian fellowship. You remember the words of kindly counsel you then received, and the earnest prayer that was offered for your welfare ; and above all, you remember the vow you reg-

istered that you would consecrate your whole life to that Lord who loved you so much. In the presence of your fellow-men — in the presence of angels — yea, in the presence of God himself — you sang —

“Witness ye men and angels now,
Before the Lord I speak;
To him I make a solemn vow,
A vow I dare not break —
That long as life itself shall last,
Myself to Christ I’ll yield;
Nor from his cause will I depart,
Or ever quit the field.”

That vow was full of meaning, and fully expressed too. Have you performed your vow?

5. Much cause have we for heart-searching in this matter.

III. THE VOW CALLED TO REMEMBRANCE.

On this point I remark —

1. *That the Lord is never at a loss for means in order that his ends may be gained.*

In the text before us a direct command is given to Jacob. Verse 1.

2. *Mark the way in which it is done.*

a. *A gentle hint — “Arise, go to Bethel.”*

b. *Then the command — “And make there an altar.”*

c. *Has not the Lord brought your vows to your remembrance, brethren?*

Indicate the means he uses, — (1) Failure; (2) Sickness; (3) Conscience, etc.

IV. THE VOW PAID.

1. *Jacob waited no longer now, but at once arose and went to Bethel.* Can you imagine him returning to the old place

where twenty-eight years ago he slept with that stone for a pillow? What feelings of shame and remorse would be his that he had so long forgotten his promise? what feelings of gladness, too, because he is permitted to return!

2. Is it now so with you? Are you filled with sorrow at your own forgetfulness? You may be *glad*, for now you may perform your vows.

LESSONS.

1. Sacred influences and scenes soon pass away.
2. God's forbearance with our delays.
3. Our influence on others. Jacob did not go to Bethel alone.

A. F. BARFIELD.

SHAMMAH AND BENAIAH.

2 Sam. 23 : 8, 11, 12, 20, 22.

I WISH you for awhile to look at the deed of this man Shammah, who stood in the midst of the plot of lentiles and defended it, and slew the Philistines, and Benaiah, who slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day. How did Shammah's deed come about? The Philistines were gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentiles, "and the people fled from the Philistines." But he stood in the midst of the ground and defended it, and slew the Philistines, and the Lord wrought a great victory.

THE TIDE WILL TURN.

The one idea that leaps up from this narrative is that which you often find through Scripture, that in the day of defeat and disaster, all God wants is one whole-hearted man.

If the Lord can only get a beginning made, if he can, amid all the disgraceful stampede and rout, get but one man to stop running, one to stop flying, one soul clear from unbelief and panic and fear, and begin to trust in him, there and then the tide of battle shall be turned. Israel under the power of the Philistines! That happens often — Israel disorganized and scattered, and the Philistines, for the time being, strong and triumphant. One day a little group of the Israelites are going out in a feeble way to reap a wretched little patch of lentiles, the seed of which they had sown in the spring; but lo! as they step out to reap it, down come the marauding, plundering, ravaging Philistines, and the people flee before them. It was expected. The Philistines did not suppose they would have to fight, and their expectations were answered. The people flee; on come the Philistines, and off go the Israelites before them — all but one man; that man was Shammah, the son of Agee, the Hararite; and what seems to be sweeping through the breast of — I was going to say the poor man — the noble man was this: “This is too bad! I am sick and tired of this. Are we forever to sow in the spring, and are these Philistines to reap our crop in the autumn? Are we forever to be trodden under foot and scattered like sheep? Death is preferable to this running, and running, and running, and in God’s great name I stand to-day — death or victory.”

Then it was a big fight for little. “He defended a plot of lentiles.” One could easily have criticised him and said, “O, this is zeal without knowledge.” “This man is making a great fight at the wrong time and at the wrong place.” Now, if he had gathered together a little committee of souls like-minded with himself, and, if they had laid their heads together — ah, that’s the plan — if they had laid their heads together, then what a lot of wood there

would have been in one place. No, he did not use the committee system; he just made himself a committee of one, with power to add Jehovah to his number, and made himself very active to the extent of such power and opportunity.

OVERTHREW THE PHILISTINES.

Shammah, plus the Lord, means "Tremble, gates of hell!" "O, the drink," we say, "it is there and it will always be there! This social impurity, this army of fallen women, it has always been there and it will always have to be! O, this commercial rottenness, it belongs to a system of things on this planet." That is what we ought not to say. This is what Shammah might have said, "O, those Philistines have come up! Well, sometimes we have our turn and sometimes they have theirs. It is their turn just now and there is no use trying to change it." He dismissed all these carnal calculations, and no doubt with a cry in his heart to the God of Israel, he laid hold of whatever was near him and laid about him lustily. In God's name let us all try it, let us all do what Shammah did—stand in the middle of what is left, with the watchword, "We will do or die." "Who would be free himself must strike the blow." But if we are striking out, the very power of the arm of the Lord is transfused into our poor arm of flesh. Let me speak to some old but backslidden believer. You are a wreck, and you know it. Your day is nearly done, and you know it. What shall you do? It is not too late; stand in the middle of the wreck left, in God's great name. If I were you I would make a fight yet; stand, although the few years left to you are like this patch of lentiles and do not seem to be worth fighting for. Stand, stand; you may die more than conqueror yet.

And those flying Israelites, at last their breath became short and they had to stand. They were tired of running and stood and looked back. I think I hear them saying, "Great God of Israel, Shammah is fighting." I have no doubt a blush of shame swept across their faces, and quicker than I am taking time to tell it, they went back to the place when victory had already begun.

Ah! if only one Christian would get a little bit of victory, it would help us all. If only one denomination would get to be successful, it would rally us all. My brother, might you not try it to-day? There is a district round about you filled with the power of Philistia, the world, the drink, I don't know what. I wish you would land down on it somewhere with a shout, and in God's name display your banner. See the Sabbath day, the holy, beautiful Sabbath of the Lord, how it is utterly wrecked in Chicago by the power of Philistia! O, that we might get the same victory for the Sabbath that Shammah got for his countrymen on the occasion of which we have read. O, that each one of us might be a Shammah to redeem the Sabbath day. Stand in the middle of the wreck that is left, and the Lord will stand for you and his holy command and his holy and beneficent purposes through the command, and God alone knows how the tide of war as regards Sabbath desecration may be rolled back.

CASE OF BENAIAH.

Now, I have scarcely any time left for the case of Benaiah, "who went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in the time of snow." Well, he was a brave man. Why? He was in a sense unlike Shammah. It is a snowy day, think of it; a snowy day, a cold day, a wet-blanket kind of morning, with nothing to stir the blood,

nothing to cheer the poor fellow. It is difficult to be brave on a day like that.

“When Dick, the shepherd, blows his nail,
And milk comes frozen home in pail.”

On a snowy day, when all others were in, sitting over the fire burning their knees, he arose, went to the door and listened. Look at him trudging through the snow. And he went on, and on, and on, and nearer and nearer came to the pit with the lion in it. He comes to the edge of it and looks down and sees the ranger and ravager and destroyer of the countryside, and with a prayer to the God of Israel he leaps down beside the lion, knowing that out of that pit only one will come up alive. It was a big deed by a big man. He leaped down. There is a roar and a spring, then a mortal groan. The lion is down. Benaiah has put his foot on his neck. “He went down and slew the lion in a pit on a snowy day!”

Did it ever occur to you that that man was wonderfully like another Benaiah? Did you ever think he was wonderfully like the Lord Jesus Christ, who, on one of the dullest and darkest days that ever the world saw, went down into the pit and encountered the devourer and destroyer of men? And he had nobody to encourage, nobody to cheer. All his disciples forsook him and fled; and single-handed, unaided, alone, he went down into the pit and slew the lion, the dragon, the devourer. He fought and he won.

“Up from the pit he arose,
With a mighty triumph o’er his foes.
He arose a victor from the dark domain,
And he lives forever with his saints to reign.
Hallelujah! Christ arose.”

The last thing I want you to notice is the little point of extra light that comes from the name. What does Benaiah mean? Benaiah means literally, "the man whom God built." Have we that strength, my brother, my sister? Men whom God built! Otherwise, no wonder we are weaklings, and no wonder we are continually overcome in the day of battle and the shock of conflict. It is a day of splendid opportunity for the individual. The battle is the common soldier's battle, and the Great Captain's eye is searching the field that he may show himself strong in the behalf of every one who is making a stand against sin.

JOHN MCNEILL.

THE CHURCH COMPARED TO A VINE.

"Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine." Ps. 80 : 14.

THE ancient church which the Almighty brought out of Egypt, is here compared to a vine. Christ, the great Teacher, used a like figure when he said, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches." Let us consider some of the particulars in which the church may be said to be like a vine:—

1. *The Root of the Vine.*—The root of the vine is Christ. Now you know well that the root of a vine is not beautiful in appearance, but is an unsightly object. If you were to see the root, and nothing but the root, you would never dream that it was of any value. So when men saw Christ, they said, "There is no form, nor comeliness in him that we should desire him." When he is spoken of as a stone, he is said to be "a stone disallowed of the builders;" but

this rejected stone has “become the head of the corner”—“the chief-corner stone.” He was the root, but to men he appeared to be worthless—“a root out of dry ground.” But this frail root, this root of David, has sent forth a vine whose branches are filling the whole earth, and the nations are eating of the fruit with gladness and joy.

2. *The Weakness of the Vine.*—It is a clinging plant ; it cannot stand alone ; it cannot support itself. Consequently it throws out tendrils, and clings to some object for support. Well, Christians are weak ; the church is weak. Nearly all the figures used to describe the church represent it as weak. For example, is the world compared to a harvest field and the disciples to “reapers” ? then “the harvest is great and the laborers are few ;” is the church compared to a “flock” ? it is a little flock to whom the Father will give the kingdom ; is the church compared to a “bride” ? then she is represented as “coming up from the wilderness *leaning* upon the arm of her beloved.” And here it is compared to a vine that must have a rack, a trellis, or a frame to cling to for support. It is when the church feels this weakness that it is strong. Israel was safer when dwelling in tents amid desert sands and warlike tribes, feeling her weakness, and trusting in God, than when dwelling in fenced cities, trusting in her own might and the strength of her walls and towers.

3. *The Vine, though a Frail Plant, Grows Rapidly.*—How weak a plant Christianity appeared at the first, but how rapidly it spread ! Peter planted it among the Gentiles when he preached to Cornelius and his family. Philip, the evangelist, carried it to Samaria ; next it took root in the the Syrian Antioch. Paul planted this precious vine all along the shores of the Mediterranean, and in the towns and

cities of Asia Minor. Long before his death, it had taken root in the palaces of the Cæsars. The Ethiopian eunuch carried a little slip of this vine into Africa, and there it took deep root and flourished for ages, yea, and about the same time it began to grow in the island of Great Britain, where it has continued to flourish and bear fruit even to the present day. And what more shall we say? for the time would fail us to tell how this vine has spread and multiplied in this wonderful century in which we live.

4. *It is the Fruit of the Vine that Makes it of Value.*—It is for this, and this alone, that men cultivate it. Some plants are valued for their roots, some for their bark, and others for their wood; but the vine is chiefly valued for its fruit. Christ says to his church, to his people, “In this is your Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.” And again he says, “My Father is the husbandman, . . . and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bear more fruit.”

5. *The Vine Requires Pruning.*—Fruitless branches must be cut off. Christ says of such, “Men gather them and burn them with fire.” O, is it true that men may be even members of a church, prominent professors of religion, and yet be burned as worthless branches?

You will notice that this is actually necessary; the vine must be pruned if it is to be fruitful. So, too, the church must exercise gospel discipline; the worthless and barren must be cut off. But bear in mind that this requires great wisdom and prudence. A man with a sharp knife might soon spoil and ruin a splendid vine. And how much wisdom is needed in dealing with fruitless professors? A vine-dresser might easily cut off branches that ought to be spared; or again, if he uses the knife in an improper season,

the vine will bleed itself to death, or almost to death. Alas, how many churches have been ruined by injudicious dealing with the members !

6. *The Vine Grows on, and Beautifies and adorns Rocky and Unsightly Places*,— such as the sides of old buildings, the rocky and barren sides of hills and mountains. Vineyards were the beauty of Palestine. That land is almost a desert to day. Its hillsides are rocky and bare; the terraces have been broken down. Where the vines once flourished, desolation now reigns. So, too, this vine beautifies and adorns the earth. Wherever it has been planted and carefully cultivated, there is spiritual beauty; and wherever it has been allowed to die, there desolation and ruin reign. How must the thoughtful traveler feel depressed, as he surveys the barren and desolate appearance of Palestine, and remembers that where nothing now exists but naked rocks, vineyards once flourished. As he examines the face of the country, he sees the remains of the terraces that once supported the soil that nourished the vines, and the ruins of aqueducts that once furnished the water to irrigate them in the time of drouth.

And what must be the feelings of the thoughtful Christian who visits those lands where the gospel once flourished, but where it was allowed to die, and where pagan darkness now reigns ! such a land, for instance, as Asia Minor or Italy, and the greater part of Europe ! There he can survey the ruins of the seven churches of the Apocalypse; there he will find the ruins of church edifices, the remains of baptistries, the relics of primitive Christianity,—but about them a moral Sahara.

7. *The Vine can be Propagated in Two Ways*.—(1) From the seed; (2) From cuttings or branches. So, too, the gospel churches are propagated, and Christianity extended in

two ways,—by the seed of the kingdom, which is the word of God; and by branches of the vine, that is, by believers themselves.

There are various ways in which the good seed can be sown — by tracts, by Bibles, etc. To propagate the vine by cuttings seems a severe way, but it is one that God has often used. When the storms of persecution fell on the first church in Jerusalem, “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word,” and so the vine spread and took root in new places.

“IS IT WELL WITH THY SOUL?”

3 John 2; Psalm 55: 18.

HEARKEN! No question greater than this! It is personal and pointed. It drives at once through all the external professions of life, and reaches the very center of our being — the soul. Some questions can be put aside, but not this one. It has power to force an answer of itself, for it reaches the conscience, and conscience is on the side of God.

It does not concern itself with “Is it well with our business or bodies,” “Is it well with our friends or foes,” but, “Is it well with thy soul?” It is for you to answer who are in the church as well as for you who are out of it, for church membership will not save. Many called him Lord, Lord, but did not enter in. It is an awful thing to go from the church to hell. It is an awful thing to be a hypocrite. The twenty-third of Matthew is the vestibule to perdition. Notice how the Lord Jesus denounced this class. Let the

pleasure seeker answer; let the gold getter answer; let the careless soul answer; let the whoremonger and drunkard speak out,—is it well with thy soul?

You may cheat your fellow-man — yes, even cheat yourself by repeated falsehood; but you cannot cheat God. His scales weigh correctly. Let me say, *It is not* well with your soul if you are living in sin; if you follow the wicked; if you reject Jesus Christ; if you have the form of godliness but no power. How answer you? *Is it well with thy soul?*

It was not well with Dives, though rich. It *was* well with Lazarus, though sick and poor. It was not well with Herod, or Felix, or the rich young ruler, while it was well with the publican who prayed, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” I would rather be the penitent thief on the cross than an unrepentant high priest.

Note the *three* places where this weighty question should be answered in the affirmative:—

1. *Now*, because of (1) the brevity of time, (2) your influence for good or ill, and (3) God’s claim on your time.

2. *At the grave*. No human being can help you there. Neither gold nor position count in that hour. This is the doorway to eternity, and as we enter so we shall be forever.

3. *At the judgment bar of God*. Woe betide all who must answer then, “It is not well with my soul.”

Note the only possible remedy for sin in the sinner:—

1. Repentance toward God, thorough, deep, and complete.

2. The full, personal acceptance of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, as your Lord and Master.

O sinner, accept Christ now; for God’s only time is now. Then you may say and sing, “It is well with my soul.”

C. H. YATMAN.

A DEPARTURE.

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." 2 Tim. 4: 6.

Death is not annihilation but a departure to another place.

Destination follows a departure.

Two Places. { Heaven — The Believer.
 { Hell — The Unbeliever.

PREPARATION.

Faith and Obedience in the Lord Jesus Christ the Believer's Preparation. Sin and Unbelief the Sinner's Preparation.

GAIN OR LOSS.

The Believer's departure a gain. His works follow him, and he has future rewards. Phil. 1: 21.

The Unbeliever parts with all that has given him pleasure. Luke 12: 20.

THE TIME.

It is appointed of God. Heb. 9: 27.

It is unknown by us. James 4: 13, 14.

The uncertainty should prompt immediate action.
Heb. 3: 7, 8.

E. W. BLISS.

AN INFALLIBLE PROMISE.

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6 : 37.

TO WHOM MADE.

Him that cometh. Isa. 1 : 18; Matt. 11 : 28, 29; Rev. 22 : 17.

HOW TO COME.

It is a spiritual coming.

Come repenting, believing, turning from self to Christ.

Come to the unseen Saviour through faith in his seen word.

COMING.

There is a certainty of acceptance, protection, forgiveness, eternal life.

E. W. BLISS.

THE BOOKS OPENED.

"And the books were opened." Rev. 20 : 12.

THERE are two judgments, at least, spoken of in the Scriptures; the first is the private judgment mentioned in John 3 : 18,—known to God, and perhaps to the individual soul. The general judgment at the last day is also in this chapter.

Note the circumstances and surroundings of the opening of the books,—the world on fire, the heavens rolled together like a scroll, and Christ coming in the clouds of heaven with all his holy angels.

Why this great difference from his first coming to our world?—Because this will be his *marriage day*; because it will be his *coronation day*; because Christ will then come as *Judge*.

What are the books that will then be opened? The language is figurative. The prophet saw the vision of the future and describes what he saw; hence what he describes as in the past will take place hereafter.

1. *The Book of God's Providence*.—Here many things are dark and mysterious. We cannot understand why God deals with us as he does; why he takes from us our property, our friends; why the saints suffer and the wicked prosper. But then all these mysteries will be cleared up.

2. *The Book of God's Law Written and Unwritten*.—The judgment will take place in accordance with the law under which we have lived, as the various courts are now held under the law which gives them their authority.

3. *The Book of God's Remembrance*.—Christ could not judge us unless he remembered all that we have done and left undone. Because he sees all things and remembers all things, life is infinitely solemn. This truth is exceedingly precious and comforting to the Christian because he knows that God will reward him for all his sacrifices. It is exceedingly fearful to the sinner because he must give account and be punished for all his sins.

4. *The Book of Individual Memory*.—We could not give account of the deeds done in the body unless we remembered all these in the judgment. It is recognized that no impression upon the soul is ever lost. At the judgment, as often in the near prospect of death, the power of memory will be wonderfully quickened. Then we shall remember every sin, whether of omission or of commission.

"The tissues of the life to be
 We weave with colors all our own,
 And on the fields of destiny
 We reap what we have sown,
 Still shall the soul around it call,
 The shadows it has gathered here;
And painted on the eternal wall
 The past shall re-appear."

This memory will be the occasion of the highest, purest joy, or of the greatest anguish. Nothing is so terrible in this life as remorse, and this will be the heritage of every lost soul at the judgment and through eternity,

5. "*The Book of Life*."—This book will be opened then, not as now to record the names of the redeemed, but to see whose names have been recorded there. He whose name is not found there will be "cast into the lake of fire."
Is your name written there? D. H. COOLEY.

THE CONSECRATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS.

(Read 1 Peter 2: 9, 10; Rev. 1: 4-6; Rev. 5: 9, 10; Ex. 29: 19-21.)

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests." Rev. 5-10.

THERE is no such thing as official priests under the new dispensation. A minister is not a priest, except in the same sense as the humblest believer.

Believers are priests. As such they are the leaders in divine worship, they are the depositaries of saving knowledge, and intercessors for fallen men. In the twenty-ninth chapter of Exodus we have the particulars concerning the

consecration of Aaron and his sons to the work of the priesthood. This ceremony was typical.

1. *The Washing*.—“And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them in water.” Ex. 29: 4.

Isaiah 1: 16 says: “Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil.” And again: “Touch not the unclean; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” Isa. 52: 11. Christ said, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.” John 13: 8. Paul said, “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. 2 Cor. 7: 1.

2. *The Anointing*.—“Then shalt thou take the anointing oil and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.” Ex. 29: 7.

Jesus was anointed as our great High Priest with the Holy Spirit at his baptism. In the synagogue at Nazareth he read from the prophet: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the glad tidings,” etc., and he said, “This day is this scripture fulfilled.”

The disciples were anointed with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. This was an anointing for *ministry* or work, as Christ was at the Jordan. It was not for working miracles as some suppose, for the disciples wrought miracles before this. *Have you been anointed for service?* We are but poor workers without it.

3. *The Clothing*.—“And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat and the robe of ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: and thou shalt put the mitre

upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre." Ex. 29 : 5, 6.

Some things are to be put off and some things are to be put on: "Put on him the best robe." Luke 15 : 22. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 13 : 14. "Put ye on the new man." Eph. 4 : 24. "Put on bowels of mercies." Col. 3 : 12. "Put on charity." Col. 3 : 14.

In Revelation the saints are seen in white robes, "which is the righteousness of the saints." In Ephesians 5 : 25-27 Paul tells us that "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

A woman takes a piece of dirty linen and washes it in water, and bleaches it on the green grass till at last it is pure and white, but alas it is full of wrinkles. To remove these, she puts it under the hot iron. Even so in regeneration we have been washed, made "whiter than snow." But alas! the wrinkles still remain,—ugly, selfish, crooked dispositions. Then begins the second process—the work of sanctification. For this our Lord often uses the hot iron of trial and affliction. Thank God, we are to be perfected at the last, and Christ is to be glorified in the persons of his saints. We are to be "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

4. *The Touching with Blood.*—"And take the blood and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron." Ex. 29 : 20. Upon the ear for hearing,— "Incline thine ears unto me;" "Hear, and your souls shall live;" "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound;" "Take heed how you hear;" "Faith cometh by hearing."

Upon the hand for work,—“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;” “He showed them his hands;” “Palms in their hands.”

Upon the foot for a godly walk,—“Enoch walked with God;” “The feet of the wicked are swift to shed blood;” “How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings; that publisheth peace.”

A missionary standing on a raised platform was preaching, when a native came up and putting his hands on the good man's feet, exclaimed, “Beautiful feet that came so far to tell me how to be saved.”

NATURE, SINFULNESS, AND CONSEQUENCE OF UNBELIEF.

He that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16: 16.

THIS is one of the most awful declarations found in all the sacred volume, and assumes a character of peculiar interest and solemnity when we consider (1) By whom it was made; and (2) The circumstances under which it was made.

It was made not by an enemy but by a friend, even the loving, tender-hearted Saviour. It was made during his last interview with his disciples. He had died; he had risen; and was about to ascend into heaven; and then he said: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Unbelief is the greatest of all sins; it is the sin that shuts the soul out of heaven.

1. *Unbelief Strikes a Blow at God the Father, because it Pours Contempt on his Wisdom.*—The wisdom of God is

manifest in the heavens; in the structure of our bodies; in the seasons, etc.; but when the wisdom of God is spoken of by the Bible writers, these things are never once alluded to. They refer us to redemption. It is called "the wisdom of God," "the wisdom of God in a mystery," and "the manifold wisdom of God."

2. *Unbelief Strikes Another Blow at God the Father, by Pouring Contempt on the Love of God.*—God has given many proofs of his love; but the greatest was the gift of his Son. This is love indeed—"love divine, all love excelling."

3. *Unbelief Strikes Another Blow at God the Father, by Pouring Contempt upon his Sovereignty.*—The Creator has an unquestioned right to legislate for that which he has made. He has legislated for man. In wisdom and in love he has devised the plan of salvation through his Son Jesus Christ. He has positively declared there is salvation in no other. Now unbelief rejects this God-ordained way. It is high-handed rebellion.

4. *Unbelief Strikes Another Blow at God the Father by Pouring Contempt upon his Truth.*—John says, "He that believeth the record of God concerning his Son hath set to his seal that God is true; but he that believeth not, hath made God a liar." What strong language, and in what an awful light does it set the sin of unbelief.

5. *Unbelief Strikes a Blow at God the Son by Pouring Contempt upon his Mediatorial Character.*—Glorious as God the Father is, there is a new loveliness thrown around the second person in the Trinity, as God, man, mediator. Faith adores; unbelief scoffs. Faith says, This is the Rose of Sharon; the one altogether lovely! Unbelief says, He is a root out of dry ground, etc.

6. *Unbelief Strikes Another Blow at God the Son by Pouring Contempt upon his Mediatorial Sufferings.*—A good man in distress presents a scene that affects the heart, but this was more than man. He is God's eternal Son. How great the sin that treats these sufferings with contempt!

7. *Unbelief would Rob the Saviour of his Mediatorial Reward.*—“For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame.” What joy was this?—The joy of saving sinners from eternal ruin. Unbelief seeks to thwart this.

8. *The Consequences of Unbelief.*—“Shall be damned.” O, who can tell what that means? It is to bear our sins forever; to have no part in the first resurrection; to be cast into outer darkness; to be forever separated from the righteous.

DANIEL BAKER.

THE TWO BROTHERS.

Luke 15 : 11-16.

WHAT is the design of the parable? Some have thought it was designed to represent the backslider; others, the Jews and Gentiles. The context makes the design plain, it was to rebuke the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, and to encourage the humble, penitent seekers. We have here two characters represented by two sons. The real point of the parable is found in what Christ says of the elder brother.

I. THE YOUNGER SON'S DEPARTURE.—His great sin was *ingratitude*. He demanded his share of the father's goods. He went into a far country. The sinner seeks to

get away from God and the restraints of religion. He wasted "his substance in riotous living."

II. HIS REPENTANCE.—His goods gone, "he began to be in want." How suggestive the words, "There was a famine in that land." There is no hunger so terrible as that of the soul. God blessed these afflictions to the young man's good. "Whom he loveth he chasteneth."

"Afflictions, though they seem severe,
In mercy oft are sent;
They stopped the Prodigal's career,
And caused him to repent."

The younger brother has usually been painted very black, but I think there was much in him to admire — much that was truly noble. I do not think he was as bad as the elder brother. That elder one was a contemptible fellow with a small soul. Had he gone away into that far country, I do not think he would ever have come back again.

1. This younger one was free hearted. He spent all. His brother never would have done that.

2. He was manly. He had a large amount of self-respect. True he spent all foolishly, wickedly; but when it was gone, he was willing to *work*. He did not hang around some city or town, but went out into the country and hired out to do such work as he could get.

3. He was honest. He would not steal though pressed by hunger. "He fain would have filled himself with the husks that the swine did eat, but no man gave unto him." When you find a man who is willing to work and unwilling to steal, you have found one with great possibilities in him.

III. HIS RETURN.—Notice the steps by which he came back.

1. He came to himself. He had been as one out of his mind. Sir is moral insanity.

“ ‘T is palsy, plague, and fever,
And *madness* all combined;
And none but a believer
The least relief can find.”

2. He began to reason. This is one of the first steps toward a new life. “Come, saith the Lord, and let us reason together.”

3. He thought of home. Whenever one begins to feel that home is precious, he is not far from safety. “The sparkle of the wine-cup can be seen but a little way, but a mother’s eye can be seen for miles and miles.”

4. He resolved to return. He said, “*I will.*” It was not easy to do that. Perhaps you think it was easy. Well, then, you try it.

Look at some of the difficulties that had to be overcome—that had to be faced.

1. He had not been invited back. Thank God, we have been, time and time again.

2. He would have to tell his story. Would not the father demand explanations? “Son, where are the goods that I gave thee?”

3. Then he might not be received at all.

4. Then what would that sanctimonious brother say?

IV. HIS RECEPTION.—He had found a high estimate of his father’s love or he could never have gone back; but it was greater than he had ever conceived. Had he returned as a prince, he could not have received a warmer welcome home.

“Imagine the feelings of that lad as he approaches the old home. Just over the hill yonder is the place. O how

his heart swells with anxiety ! ‘Is father still alive ? In these rags will he receive me ?’ The father sees him while he is yet afar off, and runs to meet him. He brings him into the house. He commands the servants to put the best robe upon him, a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.”

There are three joys spoken of in heaven ; the joy of the angels when God created the worlds ; the joy of the heavenly host when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and the joy over a repenting sinner. O, if you would but come to Christ now, all the bells in heaven would ring, and all the angels in heaven would sing !

V. THE ELDER BROTHER’S ENVY.—Amid all the rejoicings there was one complaining voice ; one frowning face — and that a brother’s. He was “in the fields” when his brother arrived. I suppose he had been whitewashing the sepulchers. Returning, he heard the sound of rejoicing, and inquired what it all meant, and was told, “Thy brother has come,” etc. “And he was angry.”

The absolute selfishness of his character is seen in his conversation with his father —

1. He boasts of his righteousness, — “I served thee these many years.” He puts his father under obligation to him. His righteousness is perfect, — “Neither transgressed I thy command at any time.”

2. He endeavors to show his brother in the worst possible light, — “But this thy son,” etc.

3. He even presumes to rebuke his parent, — “Thou hast never killed a calf for me.”

APPLICATION.

1. Let the penitent sinner, who mourns his past folly and wickedness, be encouraged by the story of the younger brother to return to his heavenly Father at once.

“Return, O wandering soul, return
And seek an injured father's face;
Those warm desires that in thee burn
Were kindled by reclaiming grace.”

2. If there is in us, who profess to be children of God, a self-righteous, censorious spirit, let us behold our portrait in the elder son and learn to abhor it.

GOD'S WONDERFUL LOVE.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3 : 16.

LUTHER called this verse “the Bible in miniature.” There is truth enough in this verse, if fully believed, to save the world.

I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS LOVE.

1. It is eternal love. “God so *loved* the world.” When did it begin? Not at the cross, not in the garden, not in the manger. He was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.”

2. It was compassionate love. “God so *loved* the world.” It was not the love of approbation, nor the love of complacency. What a weak and wicked world it was! and yet Christ loved it.

3. It is unspeakable love. “God *so* loved the world. No angel plummet can sound the depth of that little word “*so*.” Nowhere does the word of God attempt to define the love of God. If any man might attempt to do so, Paul

might. But he simply speaks of its height, depth, length, and breadth "*which passeth knowledge.*" Surely John knows it. Once he pillowed his head on the bosom of his Lord. He can only say, "Behold what manner of love!"

II. THE MANIFESTATION OF THIS LOVE.

"He gave his only begotten Son."

1. This is a *condescending* manifestation of love.

2. This is a *sacrificial* manifestation of love. God gave Christ to the cross. He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

3. This was an *exhaustive* manifestation of love. God's love is seen in earth and air, in sea and sky. But this is its grandest display. "What more can God do for his vineyard?"

III. THE PURPOSE OF THIS LOVE.

"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

1. The *breadth* of this purpose is worthy of remark. Thank God for that word "*whosoever.*" It includes all who will accept. It includes you.

2. The *limitation* is also solemnly suggestive — "believeth." Has Christ died for all? — He has. Shall all therefore be saved? — "He that believeth not shall be damned." Here is an awful limitation. O, believe now!

3. The *blessedness* of this purpose — "should not perish, but have everlasting life." This blessedness is twofold. It is negative and positive. To *perish*; who can fathom that word? But to have everlasting life! O loving God! who can tell what that means? Angels cannot.

R. A. MAC ARTHUR.

GOD'S GIFT TO A PERISHING WORLD.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3 : 16.

BECAUSE God's love has been obscured and other truths unduly emphasized, the great errors of Mariolatry among Catholics, and Universalism among Protestants have prevailed. It is the tendency of the human mind, unduly pressed in one direction, to swing off in the contrary direction. God's love being fundamental, needs to be specially emphasized in every age. This text is in essence the whole gospel. All the rest of the Bible is but the unfolding and development of this great general truth. Notice —

1. *The Objects of God's Love.*—Not the good only but also the most vile. The Father, not the Son only, loves the whole human race. There is not one whom he would not save. As the Saviour wept over Jerusalem, so the Father's heart goes out after every sinner. “God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Not one would have loved God first, but we love him because “he first loved us.”

2. *Why Does God Love All*—the wicked as well as the good ?

(a) Because he created us. God loves everything which he has made, and above all, man, the crown of his creative skill.

(b) Because of man's capacities. The infant is the most helpless of the young of all animals, but because of its boundless capacities, it is of inestimable worth.

(c) Because we are God's children. The sinner is not a child of God by adoption and regeneration as the Christian

is, but by natural creation. Paul, on Mars Hill, quoted the Grecian poet as saying, "For we are also his offspring;" and because we are God's children, he loves us irrespective of our moral character.

(d) Because it is his nature to love, as it is that of the sun to shine. "God is love."

3. *The Kind of Love Which God Has Toward All.*—Not the love of approbation or of complacency such as he has toward the angels who have always done his will; not the love which he has for those who have accepted his Son, and are in him, but the love of compassion and pity. David loved Absalom not because he was a model and dutiful son, but because he was his child, and the father's heart yearned over his boy. Such is the love God has for sinners, and it is fully illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son.

4. *The Measure of God's Love.*—Love cannot be estimated by avoirdupois or troy weights, but by the sacrifices which it prompts. The friend, the lover, the parent, the child, all show their real love by their willingness to make sacrifices for the object of their love. The patriot shows his, not by words but by sufferings on the tented field. Parents and wives showed their love of country by giving up those dearer to them than life, in our late war.

Members of the church evince their love not so much by words as by what they are willing to do and suffer and give for the church. So God measures his love to us by giving his only begotten Son. He so loves us that he gladly makes the highest sacrifice of which even God is capable.

Notice also the significance of the word "give" in the text. How immeasurably better than any other word! "Sent" is a favorite word in this gospel, but used here it would mean that Christ came to our world to do a special

work; and having performed it, sustains no different relation to us from what he did before he came. Such is not God's gift to us. The Father will never take away this gift. When Christ took upon himself our nature, he became the Son of Man forever. We need him not only for our Redeemer but also for our Judge at the last day and for our King through everlasting ages. In both of these relations we need one who is one with us.

5. *The Results of God's Gift.*—Will all be saved because God loves us?—No! but all who believe on the Son. Christ by his atoning death provided a way by which God can be just and justify the sinner who believeth. All will be saved who accept this gift. God never forces the human will; he respects the sanctity of our choice. He wants to save every one. He pleads, entreats, but never uses compulsion.

CONCLUSION.

God's love is the great motive to actuate us to go out after the fallen, the outcast, and the vile. It is also the great argument to use with them to be reconciled unto God. He loves them; he gave his Son for them; Christ died for them. This truth will melt hard hearts as nothing else will.

D. H. COOLEY.

TESTIMONY CONCERNING CHRIST.

John 5 : 32-47.

How do we know the main facts which we are called upon to believe about Jesus Christ? In a court of law they are exceedingly particular about their witnesses. Jesus Christ took very great pains that the testimony about his ministry should be of a legal sort, such as a Jew would be

obliged to receive on legal grounds. Under the law there must be two or three witnesses in order to make a testimony valid, and these must concur. Jesus Christ put himself under the law. In this chapter Christ takes up the question of evidence.

The first point he makes is that if he bore witness of himself, though it might be true, strictly speaking, yet it would not be true in court. The second point is that he rules out human testimony. Next we find two witnesses, *works* and the *Father*. And by whom were the works done?—By the *Holy Spirit*. So we find the Father and the Holy Spirit witnesses to Jesus. He stakes his character upon these two witnesses, and constantly appeals to them. What are the great facts to be attested?

1. *The Sonship of Jesus Christ*.—In Matt. 3:16–18, we find the Father speaking out of heaven; and when the Father has spoken, the Holy Ghost comes down and rests upon him. Here again the Father and Holy Ghost are the two witnesses. No human witness was competent to pass on this question. Man could not bear testimony upon it, and therefore man was not called into court.

This was the great contested point all through our Lord's life. Satan knew this, and immediately took it up. The whole temptation in the wilderness turned upon this question. It followed him to the close of his life. How did those who believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, know that he was such? In Matt. 16:17 he says distinctly that Peter could not know this by human testimony. Everything turns upon believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Does your assurance of faith turn upon that?

We have long been accustomed to say we know that we believe in God because we have the witness in us. But we

have a better witness, one right from heaven. Here is one standing in the water to be baptized; God speaks out of heaven and testifies that this one is his Son. How can I believe that Jesus is the Son of God? — Because God hath spoken it out of heaven. This point must be insisted upon in dealing with inquirers. I have no doubt that we are elsewhere taught that the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit; but the first witness on which we rest our faith is God's word.

2. *The Atonement.*—Two heavenly men, Moses and Elias, came a long distance to bear witness to this, the most important fact in history. The Greek word which is translated “decease” is really “exodus.” Dean Alford says that when Jesus Christ was about to enter into his sufferings, he longed for sympathy from some one who was capable of entering into his sorrow. Who could do this? Not his disciples. They could not comfort, so God sent him two old friends from home with whom he was well acquainted, who understood all about it. Of all witnesses they were the most fit.

Moses could talk about the “exodus.” He was God's best man, yet he failed when it came to the test. Elijah, the great prophet of the Old Testament, got discouraged, so that God had to relieve him of his command. They knew that here was one who could not fail in his exodus, the going down into the grave to lead out at his coming all those who are asleep in Jesus. Elijah represents the translated saints who do not see death, and Moses represents the buried saints who shall be raised up. These two were witnesses of the great fact of Christ's redemption, not merely of his death alone.

3. *The Resurrection.*—Two men bore witness of his death, Joseph of Arimathea and the centurion. A man

can bear witness of death, but he must have heavenly witness for his resurrection. The angels said something more than, "He is risen." "*He arose*," they said, as though they were reporting something which they had witnessed. I believe, though I cannot prove it, that they actually saw him rise. No man saw him rise. These angels gave the first testimony of the resurrection. Later we have fifteen separate classes of witnesses confirmatory of the fact. An English writer speaking of the story which is believed by many Jews to-day, — that his disciples came by night and stole him away, says, "When a burglar breaks into a house, does he go away leaving things in perfect order, folded up carefully, or in the disorder of a sudden departure?" We find everything in the empty tomb in perfect order. These heavenly beings did not leave the tomb as burglars would leave it.

A. J. GORDON.

SERMON TO YOUNG MEN.

"Run, speak to this young man." Zech. 2 : 4.

THE land and the city had been laid waste on account of the evil of the fathers. God had thoughts of mercy to restore the people to hope and blessing. A young man was sent to prepare for the work. While prosecuting his mission, two messengers were sent to give him directions. In doing so one cried out, "Run, speak to this young man." There never was a time when we needed to run and speak to the young men as we do now.

FOUR REASONS WHY.

1. Now the young man is susceptible of habits and training as he will never be again.

2. Now, his soul's welfare demands immediate attention and care.

3. Now, parental influence and love have more power over him than they will ever have again.

4. Early associations have a strong bearing upon his future life.

SOME PERSONAL FEATURES.

1. What young man? Speak to that profane young man.

2. What young man? Speak to that prayerless young man.

3. What young man? Speak to that intemperate young man.

4. What young man? Speak to that young man who is neglecting his Bible.

5. What young man? Speak to that Christian young man; call him to entire consecration to Christ.

6. What young man? Speak to that young man who is neglecting his soul, and says there is time enough yet.

A. P. GRAVES.

THE POWER OF FAITH.

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Rom. 4: 20.

I AM going to take the case of Caleb. Let us notice the thirteenth chapter of the book of Numbers. You will find that Caleb was one of the heads of the tribes who were sent by Moses to spy out the land. We will read the 25th verse: "And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses and to Aaron,

and to all the congregation of the children of Isarel. . . . And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. . . . And Caleb stilled the people before Moses." Mark the utterance of the man of faith — I have noticed again and again, how faith not only holds to its own but infuses its courage into others. It was just so with David before the fight with Goliath. The very first words he uttered before King Saul, after he had volunteered to fight, were: "Let no man's heart fail because of him." So Caleb, just in the same spirit, "stilled the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once." That is what faith always says.

"But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." That is what unbelief always says: "And they brought up an evil report of the land, . . . saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature."

Now just a thought about that. If you will look at the 22nd verse, you will see that the very place where they saw the men of great stature was Hebron. "And they ascended by the south and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were." Now observe, Caleb saw what the others did not see, yet he looked the difficulties in the face, and said, "Despite the sons of Anak we are going to overcome." Mark that, for it has an important bearing upon the after part of my address. "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which

come of the giants : and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." It is one of the most cowardly expressions that unbelief ever affirmed. We have no objections to their own estimation of themselves but to get this from their enemy's side, is too bad. However, unbelief is quite able to do that. "And the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt."

We now pass over an interval of forty years. The children of Israel are in the land. "Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, said unto him, Thou knowest the things that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God."

Mark the descent here,—the children of faith, not the children of the Kenezites. "And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses." Grand old man! Outliving the generation of unbelievers! Ah! it is faith's genius to do this. Faith will always see unbelief dying out,—certainly she must. Faith always survives the generation of unbelievers, according to a law that knows no repeal.

"Now, therefore, give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how

the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great; *if so be the Lord will be*—I am sorry that I have read that “will be,” but you see it has been suggested by the translators. “Will be” is not in the original—very important that fact. It is not “will be,”—there is no idea of “will be” with the faithful. *It is so*. Then look: “I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said.” “And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance.”

In the first chapter of Judges, 12th and 13th verses, you read: “And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it, and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.” How remarkable it is that faith has not only its own personal, individual strength, but it has also a relative blessing to bestow. I have no doubt that this young man, this nephew of Caleb’s, had his eye on his uncle and knew the force of his uncle’s character, and says, “I’ll just go and attack that stronghold, that Kirjath-sepher—I will go,” and he pledges his word. He has partaken of his uncle’s courage. You know some one has said, “One man of faith will shake the country for ten miles round.” O let us say to-day, we are ready for the master’s use.

“And it came to pass, when she came to him,”—that is after the marriage,—“that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? And she said unto him, Give me a blessing.” Ah, dear child, she has not known her father for years for nought. “For thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water.” He had given his daughter a south land, sunny and pleasant. I am afraid that some Christians go and get planted under a

north-east wall where the winds blow. They want transplanting. They want to be where they can sing, "The winter is over and gone; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land."

"Give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs." O, what a beautiful finish is this,—the upper springs with their measureless fullness. But mark you, he gave her the "upper springs and the nether." Brethren, that is our position with God. We are receiving, and we are pouring out that which we have received amongst our fellow-men. If I were to go into one of your houses, and should see there a cistern remarkably full of water, and if I knew that that cistern was in connection with your water works, and that there were no ball cocks there, I should come to the conclusion that the water works were just on a level with the top of your cistern. But if I saw that cistern running over, I should come to the conclusion that it was in connection with a water supply perhaps up in the mountain, and that it was running over because of the height of that water supply.

Now I say to every Christian here to-day that if you do not run over, it is a shame. In Wales, a few years ago, one hot July day, a gentleman was passing through; and as he was going along the hot and dusty road, a little girl met him, carrying an earthen pitcher full of spring water on her head. He said to her: "My child, will you give me a draught of water?" And she lifted the jug from her head, and he drank from it, and it was so cold, and pure, that he asked, "Where do you get that beautiful water?" And she said to him, "Do you see up yonder? there's a spring coming through the hedge." "Yes; and does that spring ever dry up?" The little girl said, "Yes, in the

summer it dries up." "And what do you do then?" he asked her. "Do you see a path up the hill to another spring?" she said. "Well, does it ever dry up?" he enquired. "Yes," she said, "two or three summers ago it dried up." "And what do you do then?" the gentleman asked. "We go up to the spring at the top." "And does it never dry up?" "O no," she said, "it never dries up, away up there."

Brethren, I have led you to the fountain that never dries up. Hebron never dries up. O the inheritance! I pray you enter it. I pray you take up your abode in it. O, Great Father, help us not only to look at the truth, and see it by intellectual perception, but may it become a force, a life, a home that shall be seen by our fellow-men to thy glory. Amen.

HENRY VARLEY.

WHAT IT COSTS NOT TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

"Things present or things to come; all are yours." 1 Cor. 3: 22.

A YOUNG woman once said, when spoken to about salvation, "Don't talk that way, it makes me think, and I hate to think." There are many people who hate to think, and so they go into things blindfolded, and come out with blasted hopes, and blighted lives, and broken hearts.

Illustrate the different spheres in which this is done — in business, domestic life, etc. There is no direction in which this is so often done, and in which the results are so fatal as in the matter of being, or not being a Christian. People go into or drift on in a Christless life without ever stopping

to think what it costs. I ask you to do some sober, serious, and honest thinking; and what I want you to think about is, "What it costs not to be a Christian." Then I want you to decide whether you are willing to pay the cost; and if not, to accept Christ at once.

Define what it means to be a Christian, to come to God as a lost sinner and accept Christ as a personal Saviour and Master; to confess Christ openly as such before the world, and to strive to do in all things that which pleases him. Think, then, what it costs not to be a Christian:—

1. It costs *the sacrifice of peace of conscience*. The Christian has peace. Rom. 5:1. The one out of Christ has no such peace. Isa. 57:21. I once asked a traveling man, "Why are you not a Christian?" "I am very well satisfied with the way I am living," he replied. "But you have not peace." "How do you know that?" he asked. "God says so—he says, 'There is no peace to the wicked,'" I answered. Dropping his head, he said, "That's so; I have n't peace."

2. It costs *the sacrifice of the sense of security which the believer has*. Isa. 26:3; Rom. 8:28. *Illustrate* by one who is not a Christian, and one who is, in time of need, in time of sickness, etc.

3. It costs the sacrifice of the *highest joy to be known upon earth*. 1 Peter 1:8. No one but the Christian has "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

4. It costs the sacrifice of *hope*. The believer has hope. Titus 1:2. How magnificent that hope is—eternal life! How sure it is, resting upon the word of God who cannot lie. The one who is not a Christian has no such hope. Hope for the future, if sure, is more important than present possessions. The man who is not a Christian has no sure hope even for the life that now is.

5. It costs the sacrifice of *the highest manhood*. The highest manhood is only possible through accepting the redeeming and regenerating grace of God in Jesus Christ. Rom. 8: 29; John 8: 34-36. The best that one can attain out of Christ is but a caricature of true manhood.

6. It costs the sacrifice of *God's favor*. We have sacrificed God's favor by sin, and the only way back is by accepting the sin-bearer he has provided. John 3: 16.

7. It costs the sacrifice of *Christ's acknowledgment in the world to come*. Matt. 10: 32, 33; Mark 8: 38.

8. It costs the sacrifice of *eternal life, and the endurance of eternal destruction*. John 3: 14-16, 36; 2 Thess. 2: 8, 9. What do eternal life and eternal destruction mean? Give Bible representations.

CONCLUSION.

This in part is what it costs not to be a Christian. Are you willing to pay this cost? It costs something to be a Christian. (State briefly what.) Are you willing for the sake of the godless companions you can keep, to sacrifice peace? Look this squarely in the face. If not, accept Jesus as your Saviour and Master *now*. Confess him before men, and begin at once to do the things that please him.

R. A. TORREY.

THE GOSPEL A SYSTEM OF MERCY, TRUTH, AND POWER.

“*Beginning at Jerusalem.*” *Luke 24 : 47.*

THIS direction to the disciples first of all to preach the gospel at Jerusalem has often been used, and with great propriety, to indicate the divine order by which the world is to be evangelized. But there are other lessons that may be deduced from this direction with equal propriety. We think it illustrates the abundance of the Saviour's compassion, and indicates his confidence in its truthfulness and power.

1. *The Gospel Must Be a System of Mercy since it was First Preached at Jerusalem.*—The Scriptures abundantly teach that man universally has come short of the glory of God, and has no claim upon the divine clemency. But this was true of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in a form involving peculiar guilt.

The promised Messiah had come to them as to his own peculiar people, but they had “received him not.” In no city had he so taught; for no city had he so labored, prayed, and wept. But they had despised his teachings, and spurned his endeavors to do them good. Nay, more awful still, they had demanded that he be put to death—that he be crucified. They had said, “Let his blood be upon us and upon our children.”

And yet so great was the mercy of the Redeemer that he commanded his disciples to make known to them *first* the rich and free provisions of his grace. He acts his prayer, “Father, forgive them,” etc.

Moreover he may have designed to afford encouragement to despondent souls in all coming time and in all lands by

this one great exhibition of his love. If the Saviour was willing to show mercy to Jerusalem sinners,—to his very murderers,—then surely none need ever despair of his willingness to save.

2. *The Gospel Must Be a System of Truth or it would not have been First Believed at Jerusalem.*—The gospel asks no blind credence, but an intelligent faith. Its proclamation embraces a large array of clear, well-defined, and well-attested facts. The gospel must be true or it would not have been first believed in Jerusalem.

The reason is obvious. If the facts that the gospel asserts were not true, then the means of refuting them must have been abundant in Jerusalem.

Take the facts connected with his birth. Though a third of a century had passed since the angels had appeared to the shepherds, yet many persons must have been still living who remembered the visit of the magi, and the slaughter of the babes in Bethlehem. Take his wonderful works. The disciples, we know, continually appealed to these as evidences of his Messiahship. In our day an unbeliever would have a very convenient method of disposing of this kind of testimony. He would simply say, “Where are the witnesses?” The disciples, when the gospel was first preached in Jerusalem, could summon a cloud of witnesses. The famished thousands whom he had miraculously fed; the blind whose eyes he had opened; the dead whom he had restored to life, etc., etc. His miracles were then known as realities among both friends and foes. If not, why was the gospel believed at the first in the very city where the means must have existed for proving their falsity?

Take the fact of his death and resurrection. This we know was the burden of their ministry. They could appeal

to the witnesses who had seen him on the cross and beheld the darkness at noonday. They would take them out to the new-made, empty tomb and say to them, "Behold your risen Lord." If the resurrection was not a reality, it would have been easy to have detected the imposition at that time in that place.

In the very first public address, after the commission was given, it was said in the presence of awe-stricken thousands, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, *as ye yourselves also know*, him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have *crucified and slain, whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death*, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." In this brief address the apostle has given an epitome of the principal facts embraced in the gospel system, the life of Christ, the miracles of Christ, the death and resurrection of Christ. All these are brought to view, and we must remember that they were believed by thousands, and that, too, in Jerusalem.

3. *The Gospel Must Be a System of Power or it would Never have Prevailed at Jerusalem.*—That the gospel should prevail anywhere is an illustration of its power, etc. Peculiar considerations here. It demanded of the Jews that they should give up the forms of their cherished religion. It had as yet but few adherents, and those poor and unknown. They had already judged the case and pronounced against it. They knew what it would cost them to become the disciples of the crucified Jesus. And yet the gospel prevailed, and Jerusalem and Judea were soon filled with the doctrines of the cross, also Samaria and Syria.

D. B. CHENEY.

THE MIDNIGHT ALARM.

“Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked, unto his sons in law.” Gen. 19 : 14.

I HAVE fancied that it was past the hour of midnight,—perhaps near the hour of two—in the morning—a time when so many people die. The inhabitants of Sodom slept, little thinking of the coming doom. A man with quick, nervous step, with excited look, might have been seen hurrying through the deserted streets of the city. The man was Lot, the nephew of Abraham. God had just warned him by two angels of the impending calamity, bidding him flee for life, with his family to a place of safety. Obedient to this command, he hastens to the homes of his sons in law, and arousing them from slumber, cries, “Up, get you out of this place.” “But he seemed as one that mocked.” Leaving them with sad heart, he returned home, where, being hastened by the angels, he fled from Sodom to the city of Zoar, after which God’s judgment for sin descended, and the cities of the plain were destroyed.

Let us consider this awful judgment under three heads or types.

1. The cities of the plain destroyed because of sin by fire are a type of our earth which awaits destruction by fire because of sin.

Referring to this great event, we read, “All the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved.” Isa. 34 : 4. “The heavens and the earth shall pass away.” Matt. 24 : 35. “The end of all things is at hand.” 1 Pet. 4 : 7. “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word, are

kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3 : 7.

Since the great fire that swept Chicago in 1871, I have watched with deep interest the rebuilding of the city. I have seen buildings rise from solid foundations twelve and eighteen stories high; and as I have looked at their solidity and strength, at their beauty and costliness, I have inquired, What shall be the end of all of man's structures upon earth? and God's word has answered, Fire, fire, fire!

But notwithstanding this fact, when I plead with men to flee to Christ for salvation, I seem to some as one that mocks.

2. The angels were sent to save Lot from the doom of Sodom, and in like manner Christ came to save us from judgment to come. To this end —

"He left his Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite his grace —
Emptied himself of all but love,
And died for Adam's fallen race."

"God so loved the world," etc. John 3 : 16. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save," etc. Luke 19 : 10. He warned us by his life, teachings, self-abasement, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, etc. And yet to many even Christ appears as one that mocks.

3. Lot being warned by the angels to escape, in turn warned others, and in like manner the followers of Christ, heeding his command, are in every land, warning men to flee from the wrath to come.

The church warns as she catches up and re-voices the burning words of patriarch, prophet, and apostle concerning man's responsibility to God, and the final destruction of all things earthly; warns as she points to the types and

shadows of forty centuries converging in Jesus; warns as she points to Calvary with its bleeding victim.

“As extended on the accursed tree,
Covered with dust and sweat and blood;
See there, the King of glory, see!
Sinks and expires, the Son of God.”

She warns as she points heavenward to her risen and ascended Lord, to a convicting, regenerating Holy Spirit, to the word of God, to millions of victorious lives and triumphant deaths, until, voicing in song the words of inspiration, she cries:—

“Who suffer with our Master here
We shall before his face appear,
And by his side sit down;
To patient faith the prize is sure,
And all that to the end endure
The cross, shall wear the crown.”

Yet notwithstanding the peril of the sinner, the many voices that warn of danger and proclaim Christ to be the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, there are doubtless many present exposed to judgment, without God, without hope, to whom our words seem as an idle tale. With each I would plead, how shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation? Heb. 2: 2, 3.

God has loved; Christ has suffered; the Holy Spirit pleads; the Bible warns; the gates of mercy are open. “Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.” Therefore I plead with you by the worth of your soul, by the brevity of time, by the uses of eternity—act now, act quickly. By repentance and faith ‘accept the Son of God and live with him forever.

Off the coast of New Zealand, a few years ago, a vessel, in the darkness of the night, was driven by the tempest on

the rocks and was rapidly going to pieces. The sailors manned the small boats, and were conveying the passengers as rapidly as possible to the shore, when a little girl became separated in the confusion from her parents, and finding herself continually crowded back by those who were stronger, from entering the life-boats, and fearing lest the vessel might go down before her opportunity came, in desperation sprang onto the taffrail, and then into the howling sea, shouting, "Save me next, save me next." O that the cry might go up this moment from every perishing soul present, "Lord Jesus, save me next."

D. W. POTTER.

CONSECRATION FOR SERVICE, OR "THE KING'S QUESTION."

SERMON OUTLINE FOR CHRISTIANS.

"Who then offereth willingly to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" 1 Chron. 29:5.

THE occasion of the king's demand. 1 Chron. 28:1-10. God's ancient people confronted with a practical question, appropriate for the church,—building of the spiritual temple, etc. Eph. 2:20-22. Define difference between a consecration of self and of service. (See idea in Epistles.) Consecration of self for complete salvation; consecration of service for fullest usefulness. One may be saved and yet withhold his service, else what do the appeals of the Epistles, written to saved ones mean. Rom. 6:16, 19; 12:1,—etc.

Define briefly, "*consecration*." "Fill his hand" (see marginal reading). The Lord is weary of half-hearted,

half-handed service. Isa. 1:12-17. Define "*service*." A plain illustration of it here. Verses 7-9. Offered willingly — time, talents, gold, etc. What it does not mean, — mere church-going dress-parade; that is getting ready, not *serving* "the King's question." (See text.) Suggests some practical aspects of consecration for service:—

1. It is to be an offered service — active rather than passive. We have enough of the first, but far too little of the latter. Illustration: Railroad man who called on the pastor the morning after joining the church, and said, "I called for my orders." He was ready for aggressive work at once.

2. It must be a willing service. God cannot save unwilling sinners. God cannot use unwilling saints. The greatest hindrance to the progress of the gospel in the church is *unwillingness*, not lack of ability. God provides for the latter, but never forces the former. Illustration: the four excuses of Moses. Ex. 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10.

3. It should be a prompt service. Why the king insisted on this. Danger of delay. "Behold now is the accepted time." 2 Cor. 6:2. Has primary reference to service.

4. It is a service unto the Lord. See again the wisdom of the question, — not a service to the temple or even to the king, but unto the Lord. Make application to church or leader. Two things must follow such a consecration of service unto the Lord:—

a. Differences, divisions, and difficulties will be avoided.

b. The simplest service of the humblest servant will be enobled and magnified. The joy of glad, willing service. Jesus tasted it for us. Heb. 12:2.

J. H. ELLIOT.

CHRIST MEETING THE WORLD'S NEED.

“*When he was come down from the mountain.*” *Matt. 8 : 1*

INTRODUCTORY.

THE sermon on the mount. Describe it briefly and vividly. Note—

1. *The place of its delivery*—Mountain, mountains of Bible, etc.

2. *The matter of its composition*—Old Testament quotations. Breadth and depth of the law, etc.

3. *The Man who delivered it*—“Never man spake like this man.” He “taught as one having authority” etc.

4. *The impression it made*—People were astonished, evidently attracted; for they followed the preacher down the mountain in great multitudes, etc.

I. THE TEXT TEACHES BY INFERENCE.

1. Jesus was not to be detained by the crowd and their flattering attentions simply. Crowds do not always mean success.

2. Needy souls attract the ministry of the Master more than an astonished, curious crowd.

3. His power was not alone in word, but also in deed.

II. THE TEXT INTRODUCES US TO A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE OF GRACE.

The great Teacher had been emphasizing the law side of his ministry on earth, and now grace overflows and gives us a picture of faith in two aspects, calling out the unmerited favor of God toward the needy. Look at the two illustrations.

1. The leper. Notice,—

a. How he came — worshipping — blessed place for a needy soul.

b. His attitude. “If thou wilt thou canst,” making the most of the faith he had.

c. The result. “*I wills*” of Jesus. Touched him; identified himself with the unclean. So he does with the sinner.

2. The centurion. Notice,—

a. How he came — praying, beseeching, saying, etc. Faith in action, etc.

b. His attitude. “Speak the word.” No “ifs” about it. Beautiful, straightforward faith, etc.

c. The result. Can any one doubt it? See how Jesus regarded it. What a tribute to simple faith. It is only twice recorded that Jesus “marveled,”—at unbelief (Mark 6:6); at faith (Luke 7:9).

Where do you stand? What is your attitude toward him? Upon your answer depends how you will spend eternity.

J. H. ELLIOT.

BIBLE DOCTRINES.

“*Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ.*” Gal. 1: 8-12.

SOME persons seem to think that it matters little what doctrines a man preaches so long as he is sincere and honest in his utterances, and pure and upright in his life. The apostle, however, declares in this text that the subject-matter of one's preaching is also of vital importance. If an

angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than that which Christ had revealed, "let him be accursed." Though a man be as an angel of light, if what he preaches is contrary to the teachings of God's word, turn away from him as you would from Satan himself. The gospel has for its foundation principles certain well-known doctrines plainly revealed in the Scriptures. These doctrines have always been the object of assault on the part of the enemies of divine revelation. My purpose is to notice some of these common objections to these fundamental truths.

And first of all, there is the doctrine of inspiration. The Scriptures claim to have been written by men divinely inspired. "Holy men of old wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." One of the objections brought to this claim is the morals of the Old Testament. It is said that it permitted, nay, even sanctioned the destruction of the Canaanites, the holding of slaves, and the practice of polygamy.

As to the Canaanites they were great sinners, and were ripe for destruction. God had just as much right to destroy them by an invading army as he had to destroy the antedeluvians by a deluge of water, or the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah by a deluge of fire. We cut off a diseased limb to save the rest of the body. He had as much right to give the land of Canaan to the Israelites as he had to give this land to the whites; just as much right to cast out the Canaanites as to cast out the Indians.

As to polygamy and divorce, "from the beginning it was not so; Moses permitted it for the hardness of your hearts," Jesus said. That is, Moses gave them laws adapted to their condition, not such as were best for any condition, but such as were best suited to theirs. Once,

when the world was filled with lust and cruelty, God destroyed it all save Noah and his family. When the world a second time had lapsed into a like condition, he did not destroy it a second time, but he began an educating and developing process, and he began with them as we begin with children.

“Slavery existed among the Jews in a mild form. It existed in all the heathen nations in its worst form. In Israel there were no men stealers, no slave marts; it was hedged in by special and peculiar restrictions, and the year of Jubilee secured the freedom of every bond-man. These provisions were so effectual that in the time of our Saviour, slavery among the Jews had completely disappeared.”

The morality of the Old Testament times was not as elevated as it is in our day in gospel lands, nor could it be in the very nature of things. An Englishman visits this country, and passing through the State of Michigan he sees wheat fields in which are standing immense oak and elm trees. These trees are either dead or dying. He is very disgusted with American farming, and compares these grain fields with those of his own land. This is not quite fair; he should have compared them with the original primeval forest. So in like manner to judge fairly of Judaism, we should contrast it with the heathen nations that surrounded it. The Michigan man girdled the trees and left them standing, and sowed his seed among them, but the girdling insured their death and removal. Moses cut away the belief in idolatry, and girdled polygamy and slavery and kindred evils, and insured their gradual decay and ultimate overthrow. That it accomplished this purpose is sufficient proof of its wisdom and righteousness.

In the second place, there is the doctrine of the divine personality. The common objection is that God is unknow-

able. Now it is true that we cannot know *all* about God; but it is equally true that we can know *something* about him, just as no man knows all about nature, but all can know something about it.

Matthew Arnold, who belongs to the school of agnostics — that is the philosophy that teaches that if there is a God, we cannot know anything about him — nevertheless uses this language: “There is an eternal power in the universe, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness.” He claims that we cannot know God, and yet says this mighty power in the universe which is not ourselves is “eternal,” is *holy*, or “makes for righteousness.” Herbert Spencer, another of the same school, says: “Our belief in an omnipresent, eternal cause of the universe has a higher warrant than any other belief, but we can assign to it no attribute, and it is absolutely unknown.” Yet in this very statement of its existence he assigned to it four attributes; namely, *being, energy, omnipresence, and eternity*.

We do not have to go to the universe to prove the existence of God from design. We do not have to dig down into the bowels of the earth, nor go up to the stars for proofs of the divine existence. He is not far from every one of us. As Paul says, “In him we move and have our being;” and as Tennyson says, “Closer is he than breathing; and nearer than hands and feet.” God is here. There is no escaping him. Man is under moral law as well as physical, and if he violates the one code or the other, the penalty will in each case be inflicted. I put my hand in the fire and feel physical pain; that is proof that I have a physical system. I perform a bad action and feel the sting of conscience and the pangs of remorse; that is equally a proof that I have a moral nature. Who made the *act*? — I did. Who made the *pain*? — Some one not myself, whom I call God.

In Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon" are the following lines:—

"In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and gray,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way
And through the crevice, and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left."

The sunbeam, ethereal as it is, required a cleft, a crevice by which to enter Chillon's vault, but "the principle that works for righteousness" enters without a crevice; wherever there is a human soul, it enters, reminding us of the words of the psalmist, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Men are trying to find proofs of a God, and all the time God is finding them. When the Scriptures say, "Be sure your sins will find you out," what does it mean but that God will find you out?

In the third place there is the doctrine of the incarnation. This is plainly taught in the Scriptures. "God was manifest in the flesh." The objection is that the gospel incidents occurred so long ago that they are uncertain and unreliable. "It is true that the earlier portions of the Bible go back to a remote antiquity, but it is no less a fact that the New Testament belongs to modern history. It belongs to the period of the Roman empire, whose annals are as well authenticated as those of any nation on the earth to-day. Modern Europe is the recent outgrowth of that dead empire."

Again: "It is only twenty long life-times since the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus. There are the remains of at least a dozen buildings still standing in Europe and Asia as old or older than the New Testament. No one doubts the story of the invasion of Britain as told

by Cæsar in his Commentaries. No one doubts the story of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. And yet the one event took place fifty-five years before the birth of Christ, and the other just seventy years after." Why, then, should we reject the facts in the life of Christ as related in the Gospels. The only reason is, men do not want to believe. "They love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil."

In the fourth place there is the doctrine of a vicarious atonement. This is objected to by many. But are not all great reforms achieved by sacrifice and suffering? "What expelled the Tarquins from Rome? Was it not the death of Lucretia? What overthrew the Decemvirs? Was it not the sacrifice of Virginia? What, after a night of ages, lighted up Europe? Was it not fires fed by martyrs?"

"Right forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne;
But that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch above his own."

Why it is that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church I do not stop to inquire, but it is a historical fact, and the fact is the answer to the objection of a suffering Messiah. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we were healed." Let others have a Saviour who can teach, who can assist, who can inspire, but give me a Saviour who can save. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The grain multiplies itself through death. Vicarious suffering is the law that pervades the world. The American aloe grows for a hundred years, then blooms, and dies, and from its death there spring a multitude of aloe plants—life through death.

“Have you heard the tale of the aloe plant,
Away in the sunny clime ?
By humble growth of a hundred years
It reaches its blooming time;
And then a wondrous bud at its crown
Bursts into a thousand flowers ;
This floral green, in its beauty seen,
Is the pride of the tropical bowers :
But the plant to the flower is a sacrifice;
For it blooms but once, and blooming, dies.
Have you further heard of this aloe plant
That grows in the sunny clime ?
How every one of its thousand flowers,
As they fall in the blooming time,
Is an infant tree that fastens its roots
In the place where they fall to the ground,
And fast as they fall from the dying stem,
Grow lively and lovely around ?
By dying it lives a thousandfold
In the young that springs from the death of the old.
Have you heard of Him whom the heavens adore,
And before whom the hosts of them fall ?
How he left his choirs and anthems above
For earth in its wailings and woes,
To suffer the shame and the pain of the cross,
And die for the life of his foes ?
O, Prince of the noble ! O, Saviour divine !
What sorrow or sacrifice equal to thine ?
Have you heard of this tale, the best one of all—
The tale of the holy and true ?
He dies ! but his life now in untold souls
Springs up in the world anew !
His seed prevails and is filling the earth
As the stars fill the sky above :
He taught us to give up the love of life
For the sake of the life of love ;
His death is our life, his life is our gain—
The joy for the tear, the peace for the pain.”

ANON.

THE BREAD OF LIFE.

“And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years until they came to a land inhabited: they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.” Ex. 16: 35.

THE condition of Israel was such that they must be supplied by the living God, or die. The wilderness could not supply them with food, and since their unbelief had shut them out of the land flowing with milk and honey; since God had judicially separated them by his oath, swearing in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest, I pray you to observe how this provision was wholly of God.

1. Note first that the manna was provided by God in the dark night of their human need.

How precious is the thought thus suggested. When man was lying in the helplessness of sin, the eternal God himself brought in his own wonderful provision. I love to think how near it is, and that the Lord Jesus Christ has come to our necessities. “Who shall ascend into heaven, that is to bring Christ from above, or who shall descend into the deep, that is to bring Christ again from the dead, for the word is nigh thee.”

2. Remember how adapted to the need of the Israelite was this manna, and how beautifully adapted Christ Jesus is, as the bread of life, to every one of us.

Still men are idly speculating upon the Lord Jesus as a bundle of doctrines, of difficult theories. But I would ask you to remember how the eternal God has made him to be the bread that cometh down from heaven. He cannot bear that you should die; it is the bread that sustains; it is Christ who is the life. “I am the bread from heaven, of

which if any man eat, he shall live forever." He scatters the harvest field of the world with his presence, and bids us eat. There is not a loaf that finds its way to your table but it speaks of Jesus to you. It whispers, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."

3. Again: observe that though the manna was given in the dark night of their necessity, it needed the incoming dawn for its discovery.

I am rejoiced that the morning has dawned on the world's history. The light has come; as it is written, "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." "I am come," says Christ, "a light into the world." "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Along with the morning light came mists; there may be some of you here on whom the light has gradually come, so gradually that as yet there is a mist on the face of the condition of your mind. You are something like the poor man in the gospel, of whom it is recorded that he saw men as trees walking. The soul seeking for Christ in his own strength is like that.

4. And now, notice, "when the sun was up,"—they saw it by the light of the rising sun. The sun for us is Christ.

5. I ask you to notice another very interesting thought. They all gathered the manna.

Some gathered more, some less. How beautiful it is. It is not a hard thing to eat. Christ is adapted to the needs of all. At the end of this Bible of mine there is a list of the titles of Christ. They number three hundred and sixty-seven,—one for every day in the year, and two beyond. O the wondrous fullness there is in Christ! Tell me, brother, do you want a Saviour? He is that. Do you want a Redeemer? He is that. Do you want the Shep-

herd? He is that. Do you want love? He is that. Do you want a keeper? He is that. Do you want the Bread of Life? He is that.

I beg of you to take this Bread, and eat it, and eating it, you shall live forever. I beseech you let the Lord Jesus Christ fill the heaven of your soul, and cry out, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." Let me beg of you to eat it early in the morning. Get up early and eat the manna. Early in the morning they went out to find it. When the sun rose, the manna spoiled.

HENRY VARLEY.

FINISHED REDEMPTION.

"It is finished." John 19:30.

LAST words of dying men show the ruling passion strong in death. The last words of the great Napoleon, as he lay dying on the volcanic rock to which Britain had chained him, were, "Head of the army." His departing spirit lingered amid the thunder and carnage of battle. "Independence forever!" cried the patriotic Adams. "Where are those Belgian dispatches?" asked Lord Palmerston. "Give the gentleman a chair!" exclaimed the polite Chesterfield. "Boys, you may go now; it is getting dark," said one of Scotland's famous teachers. These dying sayings were characteristic of the men who uttered them. And as with the sons of men, so it was with the Son of God. Nothing could be more Christlike than his last words on the cross, as with sublime satisfaction he cried, "It is finished."

1. *The Old Testament Types Were Finished.*—Without the New Testament we could never understand the Old.

Leviticus must be read in the light of the cross. Its best commentary is the epistle to the Hebrews. Sacrifices, how did they originate, and where? Who instituted them? When Christ cried, "It is finished," Moses and Aaron and all the priesthood added their solemn, Amen!

2. *The Sufferings and Sorrows of Our Lord were Finished.*—He suffered in his body, hunger and thirst, weariness and pain. He suffered in his soul,— "Now is my soul sorrowful, even unto death." He experienced bereavement, loneliness, contumely, and sorrow for sins,— for the sins of others, as a father or mother for the sins of a beloved child. Why this anguish in the garden? How are we to account for it? The inspired evangelists point to his prostrate form "sweating as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground," then drop their pens and refuse to tell us more.

3. *His Redeeming Work was Done.*— This was "God manifest in the flesh." Do you wonder that nature sympathized? President Garfield suffers, and when he dies, the country is draped in black. Do you wonder that when Jesus hangs upon the cross, the heavens are dark for three dreadful hours? Do you wonder that the veil of the temple was rent in twain? That when he rose, the graves were opened? "It is finished." Then love's redeeming work is done; then heaven is opened; then justice is satisfied; then my debt is paid. "What must I do to be saved?" Nothing by way of purchase.

"Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus died and paid it all,—
Yes, all the debt you owe."

C. P.

SALVATION NOW.

"Behold now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6: 2.

DIVINE inspiration brings words together which belong together. We have here the two words united,—Salvation, Now, and that word "behold," emphasizing the fact. We are here taught that:—

1. Salvation is *ready* now.

a. The preparation period is past. "It is finished."
"All things are now ready."

b. The forces for applying this salvation are all in the field,—a completed revelation, the church and the Holy Spirit. The feast is ready, the invitations are issued.

2. Salvation is *needed* now; not needed merely to secure heaven by and by, but needed now.

a. God would not offer it now if it were not needed now. He does not urge upon us anything that is not needed.

b. The nature of salvation emphasizes its present value.

We need forgiveness now. We need a new heart now. We need strength for life's burdens, temptations, and sorrows now. We need divine wisdom now. Every age and condition of life needs a present salvation.

3. Salvation should be *accepted* now. Now is not only the accepted time but the accepting time.

a. It is the time which God has appointed. If he has set a time for the bestowment of his mercy, shall man seek some other time?

b. Delay can make the accepting no easier. God has nothing better to offer. The heart will not become more yielding by waiting.

c. Now, not in the future world, is the time to accept.

The great questions of destiny are settled here and now. Salvation can be accepted now. God does not taunt men by offering them what they cannot accept. You can accept salvation in Jesus Christ now.

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.”

J. W. CONLEY.

THE BATTLEMENT AROUND THE HOME.

“When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence.” Deut. 22:8.

To understand the text it is necessary to bear in mind that in the East the roofs of the houses are usually flat. Kitto says: “These flat roofs are often alluded to in the Scriptures, and the allusions show that they were made to serve the same uses as at the present time.”

In fine weather the inhabitants resorted to them to breathe the fresh air, to enjoy a fine prospect, or to witness any event that occurred in the neighborhood.

In Joshua we learn that the roofs were used for drying flax. Rahab took the spies to the roof of her house and covered them over with flax.

In 2 Samuel, we learn that the roof of the house was a place of resort at evening time. David was walking on the roof of his house when he fell into temptation. In Isaiah 22:1 we learn that in time of battle and siege, people fled to the housetops. In Acts we learn that the housetop was used as a place for secret prayer.

The text teaches us that God is not indifferent to what some regard as trivial things. He condemns the man who builds a house in such a way as to endanger human lives. There was danger from a flat roof; some one might inadvertently walk off from it and be killed, and so he directed that there should be a battlement built about it.

The State has a right to protect human life. A man has no right to build a house just as he pleases. So we have laws in the city regulating the material to be used; the thickness of the walls, etc.; laws regulating the plumbing, and compelling the owners of churches and halls to have the doors open outward.

But in the carrying out of the laws, how inconsistent are the authorities. The law says the doors of this church shall swing outward, and if we did not comply we should soon be compelled to do so. The law says the doors of the saloon shall be closed on the Sabbath, and they are all left wide open.

Our theme is, *How to protect the Home, and make it a place of safety.* Let me present to you *an anxious father.* We will suppose that he has been only recently converted. He comes to his pastor. He has a solemn question to propose. It is this: "How can I protect my home? How can I save my children from the temptations of city life? I have two dear boys and one darling girl, tell me how I can protect them."

Well, taking our text for a guide, suppose we proceed to put a battlement about the house to fence it in. Now a flat roof will at least have four sides, and so we must have four walls to make the protection complete.

1. *First of All, then, on the Front we will put Reverence for God's Word.*—We will store the mind with the precepts and promises of the Bible; we will fortify it with its warnings.

2. *On the Right-hand Side we will put Sabbath Observance.*—The importance of the Sabbath to the welfare of the home can scarcely be overestimated. It is the time of *social reunions*. Through the week the family has been separated. (Read Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night.") It is the time of *parental instruction*. There is no teacher like the parent. This study cannot be delegated to others. Provision should be made in the church appointments for it; that is, church services should not interfere with Sabbath home instruction.

3. *On the Left-hand Side we will put Family Worship.*—If prayer is needed anywhere in all this world, it surely is in the home. Bible instruction is not enough. Why are there so many sermons, so many Sunday-school lessons, and so few results?—Because there is no prayer in the home. The nail when it is driven must be clinched; the seed when it is sown must be rolled.

4. *On the Rear Side we will put Temperance.*—"O," says one, "I believe in temperance *in all things*—in coffee, tea, in eating and drinking." So do I—*moderation in things lawful, and total abstinence from things harmful and unlawful.*

The walls served two purposes; namely, protection and beauty. The home thus guarded will be both safe and beautiful.

GOD HELP OUR HOME !

A SOLEMN QUESTION.

"What is your life?" James 4: 14.

ON the border of the Libyan desert, between the barrenness of sand and the fertility of river, the Egyptian Sphynx has stood through four millenniums. Its look has been eastward toward the Mokattam hills, the rising sun, and the life-giving Nile. It symbolizes intelligence, strength, and imperishability.

This immortal monster, though worshiped as the author and giver of life, the ruler of the upper and lower worlds, has yet never solved one problem of life; for, after all, he is but stone. So also the fabled Grecian sphynx, propounding his riddle on the highway to Thebes, did no more than solve the problem of his own bread. Life is not a riddle to be guessed, but a problem to be solved. The immortality of stone or story is but the immortality of death.

The problem of a beating heart, a heart which, like the ocean, swells with hopes and ebbs with fears, sleeps in peace and breaks in storm, giving for destiny a port or a grave,—this is the problem of living; and each mortal, for himself, must solve it aright or be dissolved by it. The lines beginning, "So live that when thy summons comes," would better read, "So live that, knowing thy cause, thy calling, and thy crown, thou answer the first and fill out the second that thou mayest wear the last."

What is life? This question no man can answer, because no man knows. The farmer can plant a kernel of corn and see from which part of it the life springs, but the life itself he cannot see. The chemist can analyze an egg

and can make another like it, but the made egg will not hatch. Men will give fortunes to stay the stream of life when it is flowing out from their own veins, to continue the pulse beat, to keep up the respiration, but it flows out despite their will or wish.

All life is only God's, and beyond the horizon of the known, he turns it with the finger of his sovereign purpose, and none can stay his hand. Your life and my life and all life are utterly beyond human touch. We wait on God for every breath, and if God wills, we breathe. It is supremest folly for men to deny the God who gives them breath, and it is the highest wisdom to worship, serve, and bless him.

What is your life? — Probably much as it has been. What we have done we are liable to continue doing; what we have been we are likely to continue being. Inertia is that quality by which a thing tends to continuance in its present state, whether it be at rest or in motion. This law holds in soul and in morals as in matter. All things being equal, we shall be on the same road to-morrow that we are traveling to-day. If, now, we are negligent of God and eternal good, we are likely to continue thus to the end. Only a revolution can change us. This revolution the Scriptures call regeneration. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." The change must be radical, even to a new heart. Men speak lightly of changing, but they do not lightly change. They say, "I will turn to God when I am ready;" but oftenest it comes to pass that they cannot turn when they would. A favorite device of Satan in the art of soul-destroying is to keep a man assured that he can at any time be saved, until the man is so fixed in the channel of his ways that he cannot turn. To be saved we must violently break with the past.

“Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring out the false, ring in the true,
Ring in the valiant and the free,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.”

What is *your* life? — It is what you make it. Life itself is given of God, but the character of each life is determined by its possessor. Some conditions there are beyond the control of man which determine in part what his life shall be; but even these can be bent to his arrows, and beyond these he may master all. That phantom ship that sailed on a phantom sea, with one man aboard, and he at the helm, was not more surely determined in its course by that one hand than each human life is by its owner. Even God does not invade the sanctuary of the will. Herein is man's freedom and also his responsibility. With wisdom or folly he moulds the clay of character into form and fixedness, a vessel to honor or to dishonor. Ours is the work, ours the reward.

What is *your* life? — It is pilgrimage. The faculties, the emotions, the body, the soul, all are a pilgrimage. Nothing is fixed. All things move on to something beyond. That something is higher or lower, better or worse than the present. It cannot be the same. Life is development and is always after its kind. We get no grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles. When Antigonus sowed the filings of gold, he rejoiced in a crop of golden nuggets; and when Cadmus sowed the dragon's teeth, he raised a crop of destruction. Every seed is on a pilgrimage to its harvest; every faculty or faith journeys toward fruitage. The whole man is a pilgrim. His highest destiny is in God and is through the redemption of Jesus Christ. All other pilgrimage is downward, to the loss of all that is high and holy.

What is your life?—It is a part of a divine plan. One single person looks small in a plan that embraces the universe, and he is small; yet he is no less a part, and is important to the whole. God has so interwoven human being and divine purpose that his redemptive plan would entirely fail if every man failed to take the part assigned him. Each man has his peculiar part even among the myriads of men who have lived and will yet live. A nail in the scaffold and a stone in the structure may be called the one small the other great; yet the great is dependent upon the small, and both are necessary to the whole. The lad with the barley loaves and two small fishes was more important to the miracle of feeding than all the twelve disciples. From all eternity that boy was in God's plan. So are we. Shall we break from our place and be cast off forever? Let us rather fulfill the high destiny that divine goodness has made possible to us.

What is your life?—It is a vapor. By this word "vapor" James shows the lack of wisdom of counting upon length of days, when we ought to say, "If the Lord will, and we shall live," for we know not what shall be on the morrow. Are we risking all on the uncertain to-morrow? If our mortal life ends with to-day, will it end our plans? Edward Gibbon, the great historian, died in pitiful disappointment because he had plans that required ten years more of earth life to accomplish, but he seems to have had no plans that out-reached the grave. How different was it with Sir Isaac Newton, the discoverer of the laws of gravitation. He was far-sighted. His plans included death and beyond. He is still working them out.

Time is the childhood of eternity. It is but a beginning; why should we make it the end of our plans and hopes. O soul of man, with the image of God upon thee,

the breath of God within thee, eternal years before thee, this God is thy true, thy sufficient destiny. Jesus Christ is thy only life.

GILBERT FREDRICK.

MAN'S NEED OF A REFUGE.

"And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." Isa. 32 : 2.

IN the new gallery at Munich there is a remarkable painting of an approaching storm. Men and beasts are running terrified in search of a place of refuge. It is an illustration of every human life. Every man needs a hiding place.

I. FROM WHAT DOES EVERY MAN NEED A HIDING PLACE?

1. From the torments of an accusing conscience. No other torment is so great as that of an accusing conscience. Illustrate from the poets; Judas Iscariot; Lady Macbeth; modern infidels. We all have a conscience, and we have all sinned. Conscience may sleep, but it never dies. It will awake some day, and woe to the man when it does, and who has no place of refuge.

2. From the power of sin within his own soul. No man is able to master the powers of evil within himself.

3. From the power of Satan. 1 Peter 5 : 8; Eph. 6 : 11, 12. No man is a match for Satan either in cunning or in might. We need a refuge from his rage and power.

4. From the wrath to come. A judgment day is coming; a day of reckoning for sinners; a day of wrath. Acts 17 : 31; Rom. 2 : 5.

II. WHERE IS A REFUGE TO BE FOUND?

"A man shall be as a hiding place." Who is this man?
—Jesus Christ.

1. He is a refuge from an accusing conscience. Illustrate by the woman who came to me, and who had been haunted for fourteen long years by the memory of a man whom she had killed, but found peace through Isa. 53 : 6. The blood of Jesus Christ gives the guilty conscience peace.

2. From the power of our own sins, and appetites, and passions. Rom. 7 : 24, 25.

3. From the power of Satan. Eph. 6 : 10-12. Illustrate by John Wooley.

4. From the wrath to come. The Saviour who saves us from the guilt and power of sin here will surely save us from the consequences of sin in the hereafter.

Conclusion : You need a refuge; Jesus is just the refuge you need. Will you flee to him now ?

R. A. TORREY.

SERVING GOD AND MAMMON, OR THE STORY OF LOT.

(Read Genesis 13: 1-18 : 19: 12-29.)

Genesis 13 : 11-14.

THE dispute between the herdmen — Abraham's magnanimity and Lot's selfishness. So they parted. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom. His choice was made from a purely worldly standpoint. He appears to have prospered. But O, how much he lost ! Let us notice what he lost.

1. *He Lost His Friend, Abraham.*—What a friend that man must have been who is called "the friend of God" !

2. *He Lost His Wealth.*—It was all consumed in Sodom, and he was glad to escape, even with his life.

3. *He Lost His Influence.*—He lost his influence with the people where he lived. When they came to his door and insulted his guests, he went out and remonstrated with them, and they pressed upon him, “and they said, Stand back, this *fellow* came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge; now we will deal worse with thee than with them.” They pressed upon him, and he would have been destroyed, but that the angels smote that brutal crowd with blindness.

He lost his influence with his children. When he went in the night to their homes and said, “Up, get thee out of this place for the Lord will destroy it,” they thought he was insane — “like one that mocked.”

He lost his influence over his wife. He could not keep her head straight, or he might have saved her. “She looked back.”

4. *He Lost the Presence of God.*—There were three that came to Abram. One was the Angel of the Covenant,—the Angel of the LORD. Only two went to Lot. *He* stayed with Abram. Only two went, and they at first refused to go into his house saying, “We will tarry in the streets.”

5. *He Lost His Family.*—His sons, his daughters, and his sons-in-law all tarried in Sodom on that fated morn, except the two, and they were only spared to lead him into sin.

6. *He Lost His Honor.*—O, what an awful ending! He could not trust God. God said, “Escape to the mountain.” He must plead for Zoar. And O that drunken debauch that ended in shame, and from which came two sons! And who were they?—One was named Moab and the other Ammon, and from these came the Moabites and the Ammonites, the greatest enemies of God’s ancient Israel. And some of the most inveterate enemies of the

church to-day are the children of inconsistent, worldly professors of religion.

Was Lot saved? — We trust so, as we trust that some here to-day, who have tried to serve God and mammon — God and the world — will be. God help you to come out and be separate.

B. FAY MILLS.

LOT'S WIFE.

(Read Gen. 18:16-33; Gen. 19:23-28.)

“*Remember Lot's Wife.*” *Luke 17:32.*

I. REMEMBER HER PRIVILEGES.

1. She had been faithfully instructed in the knowledge of God and how to worship him.

2. She was related by one of the closest earthly ties to a child of God. She must have often seen the tears running down the face of her husband when his soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.

3. She was faithfully warned of the impending danger. Angels sent of God urged her to escape for her life — not to tarry in the plain.

II. REMEMBER HER SIN.

1. It was a sin of presumption. Her heart was still in Sodom. The angel had said, “Escape for thy life; *look not behind thee.*” She disregarded the heaven-sent warning; she looked back.

2. It was a sin of unbelief. She did not believe the angels' warning. Doubtless there was nothing to indicate the approaching calamity — “Where in that golden sky was the storm-blast that had been threatened?”

3. It was a sin in act. Faith leads to works; unbelief leads to rebellion. The murderer first hated, then killed. "O Lord, keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me."

III. REMEMBER HER FATE.

1. It was merited. She had been warned, entreated, etc.

2. It was sudden — wholly unexpected. She turned to look back, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the storm and tempest swept past. Her eyes grew dark, her blood congealed in her veins, and she stood forth a monument of the wrath of an offended God. "He that being *often* reproveth stiffeneth his neck, shall be *suddenly* cut down, and that without remedy." Thus suddenly Pharaoh perished, and Herod, and Ananias, and Sapphira his wife. Sin kills people.

3. It was final. It closed the day of grace, and ushered in the day of doom.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

1. Beware of worldly entanglements.
2. Beware of questioning God's commands.
3. Beware of delays; "To-day is the day of Salvation."

(For illustrations, see "Delays Dangerous," in "Seed Corn for the Sower;" and the "Cities of the Plain," in Whittier's Poems.)

CITIES OF REFUGE.

(Read Numbers 35 : 9-28, and Joshua 20 : 1-9.)

“ Who have fled for refuge.” Heb. 6 : 18

1. *These Cities were for Refuge.*—The man-slayer and the avenger of blood. The sinner has broken God's holy law and justice is on his track. God in mercy has provided a refuge in the person of Christ.

2. *These Cities were all Situated on High Hills.*—“ A city set on a hill cannot be hid.” Christ was lifted up on the cross. “ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” “ And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

3. *There were Six of these Cities, and if the Nation Increased, More were to be Set Apart.*—They were never to be so full that there was no more room. “ And yet there is room.”

4. *Great Pains was Taken with the Roads Leading to these Cities.*—They were to be fifty-seven feet wide. All stones and obstructions were to be carefully removed. At stated times the priests and elders were to go out and inspect them. At all points where there were turns in the roads, or others crossed them, a finger-board was to be placed with the word *Miklat*, that is “ refuge ” painted on it. The way to Christ is so plain that he who runs may read.

5. *The Names of these Cities were Typical.*—*Kedesh* means “ holy.” Christ was holy, separate from sinners. *Shechem* means a “ shoulder ” or “ support,” and “ the government shall be upon His shoulder.” *Hebron* means “ fellowship,” and “ we are called unto the fellowship of his

Son Jesus Christ, our Lord." *Bezer* means a "stronghold," and Christ is a "strong tower;" the righteous flee into it and are safe. *Ramoth* means "exaltation," and "God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name." *Golan* means "joy;" "and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

6. *These Cities had Grounds Belonging to and Surrounding them, and the Moment the Man-slayer Touched that Soil He was Safe.*—Slaves cannot breathe in England; they touch its soil and their shackles fall. If you but touch the hem of Christ's garment, you are saved!

7. The man-slayer was safe only so long as he remained in the city of refuge. Take heed lest the devil find you on his own side, on his own ground. Believers are only safe while abiding in Christ.

THE CITY OF REFUGE.

"*That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*" *Heb. 6: 18.*

1. *The View Given of the Saviour in the Text.*— "The hope set before us." The cities of refuge, a most expressive emblem of Christ Jesus. Nature can give us no hope as sinners. In the sufferings, cross, death, and burial of the Lord, we see the price and purchase of our redemption; in his resurrection, ascension, and triumphal session at the right hand of God we see the pledge, pattern, and security of our salvation; the gift, the grant of all this; the gospel sets before the hand of faith and eye of hope.

2. *The Conduct of the Man described in the Text.*— He is said to "flee for refuge," and "to lay hold upon it." The

flight of the man-slayer; such is the flight of sinners to the arms of Jesus.

3. *The Privilege and Happiness of Those who have thus Fled to Christ for Refuge.*—They have “strong consolation;” a sense of relief from danger; an assurance that they will be provided with all that is necessary. The grounds upon which this consolation rests,—“two immutable things,” the word of promise and the oath of God. The quality of this happiness,—“strong consolation;” the most solid and substantial; the most abundant and efficient; available for every emergency of life; for the solemnity of death; for the crisis of the judgment; stronger than the afflictions of life, stronger than the dread of wrath, stronger than the fear of death.

Application: Are you in the city of refuge?

DR. BEAUMONT.

THE NEED OF ATONEMENT.

“We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” Rom. 5 : 11.

THE atonement is a part of the nature of things. It exists in God’s word because of its necessity. In the domain of law it is right as opposed to wrong to all the persons and interests concerned.

It may be defined as the repairer of the breach, in regard to the transgressor, and the vindicator of the eternal claims of righteousness.

We all recognize that if a man sins against right,—that is, if he does wrong, if he commits a sin and does evil,—he should in some way make amends, render compensation, and yield atonement for the evil done and for the wrong committed.

Within the past week three atrocious cases of robbing railway trains have taken place. What is the conviction which possesses every upright mind in this house? — That atonement should be made and the crime expiated by punishment and suffering. Suppose a lady be run over by the carelessness of a car driver and her body crushed, what is the thought that at once takes possession of the mind? It is this, — that atonement and reparation should be made. I will suppose that the injury occurred at night, and under cover of the darkness the driver hurries on his horses and tries to escape the consequences of his wrong. What would every man in this house say if he were there and knew the facts? Would we not cry out, “Stop that man,” and be glad when his outrageous conduct was justly punished? It is the great truthful and powerful principle which lies inside the word “atonement” that stirs our zeal. Whether injury to life, character, property, or law be considered, the word reparation or atonement springs to mind. Therefore I say the truth of the atonement is intuitive and as really belongs to the welfare of human society in Chicago as to the higher and more imperative interests which concern the soul and the eternal world. Every compensation made, every debt paid, every wrong redressed, every crime punished, every right vindicated, illustrates the truth of atonement and shows its absolute necessity. I can find, defend, and justify the principles of the doctrine of the atonement quite apart from the theological arena to which it is supposed to be exclusively attached.

PUNISHMENT FOR WRONG-DOING.

Whether the sin or wrong be committed against God, the sovereign, the subject, the law, or the community, atonement and reparation should be made.

The whole of our civil and criminal jurisprudence is

founded upon the external dictum that wrong is no man's right. All laws not so founded are unjust and iniquitous.

That government is neither arbitrary, unjust nor despotic which insists upon the evil-doer and the law-breaker's being amenable for the consequences of his lawless actions.

The principle of the defense and vindication of the right as against the wrong lies at the basis of all true government.

The absolute necessity which exists for atonement becomes, when rightly understood, the strongest incentive to upright action and the weightiest protest against wrongdoing in every form.

The solemn fact is before every man and woman that, so far as all committed sin is concerned, they are utterly incompetent to make amends for or to render any atonement.

The tremendous fact before every one of us is that we are in one way or another constantly committing sin. We possess almost unlimited power to commit sin. We are powerless either to blot out sin, to undo it, or to put it away, or to make atonement.

Here, then, appears the absolute necessity and certainty of the great truth of the atonement effected by the infinite sacrifice of Christ Jesus the Lord. It is absolutely impossible for any man to undo the evil which he has done, or by repentance, however sincere, to expiate the guilt of committed sin. Sin which has been committed is in existence, it has being, and can never, by any human power, be put away, blotted out, or expiated. When Nathan said to the guilty king, "The Lord hath put away thy sin," he disclosed the competency of the eternal God to blot out, to put away, and make atonement for David's sin. Well may it be heralded to the ends of the earth: "I, even I, am he

that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake. Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Harken to the welcome words: "Once in the end of the world he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." And again: "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here, then, is the absolute necessity for atonement proved, as also the truth of the great fact accomplished in the garden and on the cross. Here the conclusion of this vital matter. We cannot make atonement; that is impossible. "But we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." The atonement and its fruit, the reconciliation, cannot be made by us; but, thank God, these priceless blessings can, through faith in Christ Jesus, be received.

HENRY VARLEY.

MAN'S GREAT DUTY.

"Lay hold of eternal life." 1 Tim. 6: 12.

THERE is eternal life in the gospel sufficient for all, and none are especially excluded from its benefits. Those only are excluded who exclude themselves and refuse to be saved on God's terms. "Whosoever cometh unto me," says Jesus, "I will in no wise cast out;" on no account; for no crimes, no depths of guilt, no length of resistance to my gracious offers; let him come with all sins on his head which any man ever committed; let him come in life's last, worthless hour, I will not turn away from him; "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked."

1. *Consider Our Need of Eternal Life.*—Greatest gift of God ! eternal life is deliverance from eternal death, the curse of a broken law, and the doom of a burning hell. Eternal life is eternal blessedness—the pardon of sin's guilt, and freedom from its tyrannous power ; the pleasure of a pure heart, and the enjoyment of peace with God. These we need, and how great is our need !

2. *Consider How we Obtain Eternal Life.*—Nothing in one sense, is more difficult, yet in another sense, there is nothing easier,—a wish, a word, a look, and it is yours.

Do you ask, What shall we do to inherit eternal life ? I reply with Paul, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ; but reject him whom I offer, and you may be damned,—lost this hour, and lost forever.

3. *Consider More Particularly What we Have to Do to Obtain Eternal Life.*—Do ! It is not to make ourselves more worthy of it ; nor to attempt to merit it ; nor to wait till we are holy before we come to Christ. Salvation is not of works, but of faith. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. . . . This is a faithful saying.”

4. *Consider When we are to Lay Hold on Eternal Life.*—When, but now ? I only wish I saw people as eager to be saved from hell, as I once saw a man to be saved from drowning. He had fallen into the river while getting on the ferry-boat. He could not swim, and so must have perished. He floated on his back. There came a man running and threw out a life-buoy. It fell near the sinking one. With what joy he caught it ! How he laid hold of it. I

saw him holding on, pulled from a watery grave; and I thought, Would God that poor sinners — that every man ready to perish — laid hold as eagerly on eternal life.

I gave thanks to God that he was saved. He might have been damned if he had been drowned. I rejoiced to think of the happiness in his home that night when wife and children welcomed him. But would you now lay hold of Christ, all the angels in heaven would sing, and all the bells in heaven would ring.

“For joy abounds in paradise
Among the hosts of heaven,
Soon as the sinner quits his sins,
Repents and is forgiven.”

THOMAS GUTHRIE.

QUENCHING THE SPIRIT.

“*Quench not the Spirit.*” 1 Thess. 5 : 19.

1. *How does the Holy Spirit Influence the Human Mind ?* — Not by physical agency — not by the interposition of direct physical power. The action of the will is not influenced thus, and cannot be. The Spirit influences the human mind by means of truth. This is presented to the mind in various ways by the Holy Ghost.

2. *What is Implied in This Fact ? and What must be Inferred from it ?* — God is physically omnipotent, and yet his moral influence exerted by the Spirit may be resisted. We know it to be a fact that men do resist the Holy Ghost.

3. *What It Is to Quench the Spirit.* — The Spirit enlightens the mind. It takes the things of Christ and shows

them to us. But we can refuse to receive this light. There is, so to speak, a sort of heat, a warmth and vitality attending the truth when enforced by the Spirit, and this may be quenched.

4. *Notice Some of the Ways in which the Spirit may be Quenched.*—1. By directly resisting the truth presented to the mind. 2. By endeavoring to support error. 3. By uncharitable judgment of others. 4. By hard and vituperative language. 5. By bad temper. 6. By diverting the attention from the truth. 7. By indulging in intemperate excitement on any subject. 8. By indulging in prejudice. 9. By violating conscience. 10. By indulging in appetites and passions. 11. By indulging in dishonesty. 12. By restraining prayer. 13. By idle conversation. 14. By levity and trifling. 15. By resisting the doctrine and duty of sanctification.

5. *The Consequences of Quenching the Spirit.*—1. Darkness of mind. 2. Coldness and stupidity in regard to religion generally. 3. The mind often falls into divers errors in regard to religion. 4. It often results in infidelity. 5. Great hardness of heart. 6. Delusions in regard to one's spiritual state. 7. Justification of one's self in most manifest wrong.

REMARKS.

1. Persons often are not aware what is going on within them when they are quenching the Spirit.

2. So when they come to take different views, and to abandon their former opinions, they seem not conscious of the fact that God has departed from them.

3. In this way persons often become Unitarians and Universalists.

4. Such a state of mind is most deplorable and often hopeless.

5. When an individual or a people have quenched the Spirit, they are in danger of being given up to some delusion.

6. They take entirely false ground who maintain that if a religious movement is a work of God, then it cannot be resisted.

7. An immense responsibility pertains to revivals. There is always a fearful danger lest the Spirit should be quenched.

8. Many seem not to realize the nature of the Spirit's operations, the possibility always of resisting and the great danger of quenching the light of God in the soul.

C. G. FINNEY.

ALLEGORICAL SERMON.

"The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." Prov. 3 : 14.

THIS is one of the most forceful and impressive of all the proverbs of Solomon. He takes a merchant who traffics in silver and gold to set forth the reality and activities of religion. The holy experience of grace and Christ's righteousness in the soul is as much of a reality as silver and gold is real.

THE ANALOGY.

1. The merchant wisely locates his business for success. So the Christian will first locate his gifts of prayer, song, strength, and whatever God has given him for service.

2. The wise merchant fills his place with goods for sale. The Christian for happiness and usefulness will see to it that his heart is filled with holy experience, grace, and truth.

3. The successful merchant advertises his business to the world. The Christian will likewise ever be ready to give his testimony to win souls.

4. The merchant has great concern about the prices of goods and general state of the market. The child of God will in like manner have deep interest about the affairs and state of Zion.

5. The retail merchant keeps up a frequent correspondence with the great trading marts. So with the faithful Christian. He will be constant in prayer, and have correspondence with the divine Lord.

6. Merchants differ in talents, some with large and some with smaller gifts. So with Christians ; but all are to give service to the best of their ability.

7. The successful merchant accommodates himself to his customers. The faithful Christian will always be on the alert to suit his words, acts, and influence to the best good of those around him.

8. A good merchant both dispenses and receives benefits. He sells for the benefit of others, and receives profits himself. So the useful Christian. He gives blessings to others and thereby receives benefit to his own soul.

9. The successful merchant closes up his life work with large gain. How many earnest and faithful Christians will have their crowns bedecked with stars, and yet walk the golden streets with those they have led to Christ.

Will every one who hears this discourse enter at once into holy traffic for Jesus as you never have before ?

A. P. GRAVES.

A NEW CREATURE.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. 5: 17.

It is very important to understand what we are as Christians, not merely what we ought to be, or what we will be, but what we are. Our text declares what every Christian is. "If *any* man," no matter who, is a Christian, "he is a new creature."

1. He is new in his relations to God.

a. New in his relation to the law of God. "He that believeth not is condemned already." John 3: 18. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8: 1. The convict is pardoned, and becomes a new man in relation to the law.

b. New in relation to the government of God. "Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" have become "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints." Eph. 2: 12, 19.

When the foreigner becomes naturalized, he becomes a new man in relation to our government. The alien becomes a citizen.

c. New in relation to the family of God. Every Christian is "of the household of faith." "We have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Freemen, citizens, sons! New in Christ Jesus!

2. If any man be in Christ he is new in his relations to his fellow-man. He comes at once into a new relation both to the church and to the world. The old standing is entirely changed.

a. A new man in responsibility. "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ." "He hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5: 19, 20.

b. New in opportunity. Before the Christian is an open door. He can minister to sinning, suffering, sorrowing humanity. Immeasurable opportunity !

3. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature in his experiences. Not that he will dwell continually upon the mountain top. He will still have struggles and disappointments. But a new factor has come into his life that touches and modifies every experience. "Old things have passed away."

a. There is an abiding consciousness of security.

b. The Christian is blessed in the thought that he is on the right side. He may not be a very good soldier, but he knows he is on the right side.

c. Hope is a precious element in this new experience, and —

d. Communion with God refreshes the soul. The whole range of experience is touched by the indwelling Christ.

4. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature at the center of his being. "There is a new creation" (margin, R. V.). "Ye must be born again," "partakers of the divine nature." The word "renewal" is fittingly used, *made new*, — *not* a changed heart, but "a new heart." Eze. 36 : 26. "Born of the Spirit."

a. This new life may be repressed and undeveloped, but if any man be in Christ, the new life has been begotten in his soul.

b. This is fundamental — "Except a man be born again [or anew] he cannot see the kingdom of God."

What a wonderful newness is ours ! Seeing these things are so what manner of men ought we to be ? And surely when any one unsaved comes to see what a Christian really is, he must desire to have these blessings, to be a new creat-

ure. The door is open. Enter by faith into the riches of grace in Christ Jesus, and all shall be thine.

J. W. CONLEY.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK.

(Read for a lesson John 16 : 1-15.)

'He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.' John 16 : 14.

WE ought to honor the Holy Spirit. Mr. Moody says that the turning point in his ministry was the result of what an old man said to him one day after he had addressed a Sabbath-school,—“Young man, the next time you speak, honor the Holy Spirit.”

Some persons seem to think that the Holy Spirit was not in the world till after Pentecost. But we know better from the Scriptures. He was in the world before the Deluge, for God said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” He was present under the Mosaic dispensation; for it is written, “Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” He was present in the evil times that immediately preceded the coming of our Lord, for it is recorded that there was an old man in Jerusalem named Simeon; “and to him it had been revealed by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death till he had seen the Lord’s Christ.”

1. *The Holy Spirit convicts of sin.* “And when he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin,” etc. John 16 : 8.

2. *The Holy Spirit quickens or imparts life.* Gen. 1 : 2. John 6 : 63. Eze. 37 : 1-10.

3. *The Holy Spirit imparts love.* Rom. 5:5. When we are filled with the Spirit, we do not have to try to love ; we are filled with it.

4. *The Holy Spirit imparts hope.* Rom. 15:13. How sad the condition of a man or church without hope !

5. *The Holy Spirit imparts liberty.* 2 Cor. 3:17. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "He was the freeman whom the truth made free ; all else were slaves of Satan, sin, and death."

6. *The Holy Spirit imparts consolation.* He is the Comforter. John 16:7. Sinners resist the Holy Spirit. Acts 7:51. Believers are warned against—

a. Grieving the Spirit. Eph. 4:30.

b. Quenching the Spirit. 1 Thess. 5:19.

DEVOTIONAL READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

John 5:30.

1. We may say that the Bible ought to be read the same as any other book is ; i. e., read it through, and read it a good deal at a time. For instance, when we come to the story of Joseph, why stop until it is finished ? So with a book of the Bible, read it through at a sitting. Many, in the New Testament, are letters. Treat them as you would any other letter, read at one time.

2. But such a book as Psalms, we find cannot be treated in this way. The Psalms are "devotional," and my subject hints that the Scriptures are not to be read as any other book.

Dr. A. Alexander, of Princeton Seminary, at eighty years, found "a verse enough for a day."

3. The word "devotional" suggests: (a) Praise, and certainly the Bible is full of that. Make its language your own. Again it suggests: (b) Prayer, and the Bible is full of that. Not only are there direct prayers, but almost any portion may be made a prayer, and applied to ourselves. One of the best ways to read the Bible, is to read it while we are upon our knees. An old book, but a good one, and helpful in this very way, is, "Matthew Henry on Prayer."

4. It is not assuming too much to say (as I have said above), that we may apply the Scriptures to ourselves, and I mean by this, any portion, any promise. In Gal. 3: 7, Paul declares, "They which are of faith, are the children of Abraham," and he adds further, in the 9th verse: "They which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham."

What more natural, then, as we read of Abraham's being a blessing to the world, than to kneel right down and ask God to make us a blessing too?

And so, as sons and daughters of Abraham, we may take this whole history of his children, and all these words of warning, promise, comfort, and cheer to our own hearts, as our very own.

Miss Havergal, whose hymns the people of God can never let die, belonged to a society which selected for meditation and prayer a verse of scripture for each day. In her last illness she got so low as to be able to have read to her only this verse. One day she asked for it, and the attendant read: "I, the Lord, will hold thine hand, and will keep thee." Isa. 42: 6. "Well," she said, "I will just go home on that," and she did, that day.

H. L. HONGE.

MAKE HASTE.

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19 : 10.

THIS story of the salvation of Zaccheus on the roadside, by Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God in human flesh, in all his love and grace, is an illustration of the statement made in the tenth verse: “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Of the real and awful meaning of the word “lost,” every man and woman born is the vivid, particular illustration. The lost coin, the lost sheep, the lost son or daughter, are illustrations on a lower level. But the awful reality and fact of “lostness” lies here: I have lost God, and God has lost me. And the gospel of the gospel lies in that sentence, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

How does he do it? First of all he comes to the lost sinner's town. Theologians and writers in magazines sometimes write about a thing called “s-i-n” as if it were an abstraction, and discuss it in polysyllabic, philosophical terms. When we come to the Bible, we do not find any of these polysyllabic discussions. We find sin is a reality. Sin has its power in the hearts of men and women, it is something concrete, definite, substantial, incarnate. Says the narrative, “He entered and passed through Jericho” — that is to say, He came to the lost sinner's town.

He comes to Zaccheus' town, but more than that, he comes to the particular street in which Zaccheus is. More than that, he comes to the particular tree on the roadside, in the branches of which that particular sinner is sitting; and he calls him by his name, and says to him,

“Zaccheus, make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.”

This was a man who needed saving. If any of you do not need saving, you may rise and go, for, of course, this is not for you. If you have already been found by the Saviour, you are the one who will be glued to the seat; because there is nothing you like to hear better than the old story over again. But if any of you think that you are *above the need of being saved*, then I would tell you to go out, on the plea that you may send in some other listener. The one trouble of your life, if you are not saved, is just that you do not know Jesus Christ, and have not given your heart to him; and you will never have anything worth living for, either in present possession or in expectation, if you do not get to know him.

Zaccheus was a publican; and he was a chief among the publicans; and he was rich. Zaccheus was a tax-gatherer. The taxes were farmed out, and a particular class of men lifted the taxes for the hated Roman power. When a Jew gave himself to the business of lifting the tax, he must have been a case-hardened Jew, a man who had lost all patriotic and religious feeling before he could come to this low level, that he would soil his soul and fingers making money by lifting the hated tax. They were a hated class of men, these turncoat, renegade Jews. That is the kind man we have in Zaccheus.

When Jesus is entering and passing through, Zaccheus is wakened up with a kind of natural curiosity: “He wanted to see Jesus” — *to see “the Man.”* God often works upon curiosity. Fools have come to a meeting to scoff, and have before now remained to pray. Thank God for curiosity! That is what led you astray. Do you remember how the

devil took advantage of curiosity and led you away from God? The Lord likes to break the devil's back with his own stick, and he takes this curiosity which has led, and which still leads, so many to the devil, in order to bring Zaccheus from sin and the devil, back to salvation in Jesus Christ.

Notice the difficulties in the way of seeing Jesus. There is a great crowd of people, and Zaccheus is an undersized man. What did he do? He could not see him for the crowd, because he was of little stature. If he had gone pushing and boring, there were men there who hated him, and they would have been glad to hustle him back. They would have been glad almost to take him, neck and crop, and pitch him back into the sidewalk again, and say, "Zaccheus, you have nothing to do with this. Stick to your accursed tax-lifting. That is good enough for you." What did Zaccheus do then? — "He ran." I like that fourth verse. Instead of saying, "Ah, circumstances are against me; I won't do," he girded at the difficulties. Pluck up heart of grace, man! Do you want to be saved? Then put your foot on the neck of your softness, and laziness, and milksoppiness. You will get to heaven, I trust, but you will know about it on the road. In a word, you will have to put your feet below you and run for it. What effort are you making to break from the devil's chain?

I can imagine a man who says, "It is of no use for me to make an effort; I am too weak and the chain too strong." Give a good tug, my brother. Put out your best. Rise, weak and all as you are, only rise, and God Almighty will rise with you and in you and for you. Although Alps were piled on Apennines, God the Lord will lay them in dust. Thy feet shall stand in heaven, if thou wilt but begin. That is how we are saved. God is the

bottom of it and the top of it, but he works along these natural, human lines of self-determination.

I think I hear the scamper of Zaccheus' feet on the road. And people would jeer, for there is nothing so easy, my friend, as to waste your little wit on "anxious souls." The Lord pity you for it! I can imagine that the Scribes and Pharisees, who were content to be merely in the crowd, were scoffing and saying, "Do you see him? See, he is going up like a squirrel!" They laughed and scoffed, I have no doubt. But blessed be God, Zaccheus ran on.

Do your part, and Christ will do his. Do not lie back in the devil's lap, and expect that any good will ever come to you there, but spring up and out, and away and forward, and Christ will meet you. He is always going about looking for you. Have no doubt about that. He "*came to the place*, and looked up, and saw him." It is the same to-day. My hearer, you are getting a personal call to a personal Saviour. He said to him, "Zaccheus, be quick, and come down. I am wanting to stay with you." That is the gospel.

We poor preachers have to stand and call to you loud and long, as you are sitting in the branches of gospel ordinances. "Come down! Come down! Come down! Be quick! Be quick! Be quick!" And—God pity you—you sit, and sit, and sit in the branches, and gape and stare all round about you, and drop off dead; but you do not come to Christ. It was very well for Zaccheus to climb up the tree. But it was better for him to climb down out of the tree, and come to the living Saviour at the foot of it. Sinner, are you willing to come down? It is not safe to be higher up than Christ. Come down! Come down! Come down out of pride! out of headiness! out of

high-mindedness ! Come down even out of sympathetic interest !

Have you come to Christ ? Do not stand up and say you do not know. No man can touch Christ with the tip of his little finger and not be thrilled to the very core of the heart within him. Where are you ?—Sitting in churches and chapels and halls looking on ; or down at the foot in close grips with the Christ of God himself ? Go home with him, first to your home, and then to his home in heaven.

JOHN MC NEILL.

NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM.

“Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” Mark 12 : 34.

I. Describe the Persons who may be said to be in Such a State.

1. A man may have considerable religious knowledge, and yet be in this condition.
2. There may be blameless morals.
3. There may have been strong convictions of the evil and danger of sin.
4. There may have been reformation of much that was amiss.
5. There may be a form not only of public but private devotion.

II. Endeavor to Convince Such Persons that This is Not a State to be Rested In.

1. If you continue in this state, you will never enter the kingdom of God.

2. Your falling short of it, will be a case of peculiar wretchedness.

III. Some Advice to Those who are Not Far from the Kingdom, but are Not Yet Entitled to Its Blessings.

1. Let me urge you to earnest prayer.

2. Let me invite you to retirement and serious consideration.

3. Communicate your case to some experienced Christian.

4. Observe what things have turned you back, and be upon your guard against them.

5. If you feel God moving upon your heart, give yourself to him.

6. What you do, do quickly, under a serious sense of the uncertainty of life.

DR. DODDRIDGE.

THE CROSS CONTEMPLATED.

“And sitting down, they watched him there.” Matt. 27 : 36.

THE text describes the attitude which the world maintains toward Christ crucified. With what varied interests did the multitude contemplate the sufferer ! The city walls were thronged with curious spectators ; the grounds around and overlooking the cross were filled with a jostling crowd. What diverse chords were struck, when the hammer drove the nails. “ And sitting down they watched him there.”

1. They watched him as *enemies* who rejoiced at his sufferings.

Many of those who watched were foes who had followed him as the wolf tracks its prey, thirsty for blood. They rejoiced at what appeared to be the triumph of their schemes. So the enemies of Christ still watch the Church and the progress of the gospel.

2. They watched him as *friends* who were afflicted in his sufferings.

They were not all enemies who witnessed that awful scene. There were his mother, his disciples, and the daughters of Jerusalem, which also bewailed him."

3. They watched him as *spectators* who were indifferent to his fate. Many in that vast concourse were there not from enmity nor friendship, but from idle curiosity. They had no real interest in the event. Thousands occupy that same position to-day. They claim to be neither for Christ, nor against him, but Jesus said, "He that is not *for* me is *against* me."

CONCLUSIONS.

Let us watch Christ on the cross,—

1. As exhibiting the dreadful nature and sad fruits of sin.
2. As setting forth the amazing love of God to guilty men.
3. As presenting an example of humility and patient love.

How do you contemplate Christ crucified? As *enemies* who hate him? as *friends* who love him? or as the *careless throng* who are indifferent to him? So look that your souls may live.

E. T. HISCOX.

SAVED FROM FIRE.

" Pulling them out of the fire." Jude 23.

THE thing spoken of here is *Sin*; the thing used to represent it is fire. Notice some of the resemblances between these two things.

1. *Sin, like Fire, is Mysterious.*—What is fire? Of what are its consuming properties composed? What is its weight, color, size, etc? It is all mystery, and yet we know it exists. No man can deny that.

Sin is a mystery. What is it? How came it into existence? How does it exist in a universe governed by a Being who is all powerful, all wise, and all good? There are difficulties here that perhaps the mind of an archangel cannot solve. But we know that it exists. No sane man will deny that. We have seen its destructive work all around us, and have felt its power in our own hearts.

2. *Sin is like Fire because it Exists in a Two-fold State.*—It is active and latent. Fire in its active state illuminates our streets and dwellings, flames in great conflagrations, rushes flaming and roaring over the grassy prairie, etc. In its latent state it exists in every material object, even in ice itself.

In like manner sin exists in an active and latent state. In its active state it flames out in profanity and crime. It bursts out in schemes of political corruption, and commercial dishonesty. In its latent state it slumbers in the heart of universal humanity. It exists in every man, woman, and child.

It only requires a few strokes of the steel of temptation to cause the sparks to fly out upon the timber of the sensi-

bilities, and the whole man is aflame. One would not suppose that there was fire in a piece of flint, and one would not suppose that there was sin in the heart of a little child, but there is.

3. *Sin is like Fire in its Power to Attract.*—How a child likes to play with fire. How the moths are attracted by the flame of the candle. How fascinated the deer are by the flaming torch in the hunter's bark canoe. How the people are attracted by a burning building.

So every effort is made by the devil and his agents to attract souls to their destruction. Look at the saloons, gambling houses, and places of evil resort. Flowers decorate the path that leads to hell; there is wit to amuse; beauty to attract; music to please; drink for the thirsty, and revelry for the reckless. Thousands of the young are attracted, fascinated, to these places; and before they are aware, are in the flames.

4. *Sin is like Fire because of the Way in which it Destroys.*

a. It destroys without regard to the worth of what it consumes. Splendid mansions, expensive libraries, works of art, and costly furniture,—it consumes all. So sin does not spare a man because of his transcendent endowments, because he is eloquent, learned, and patriotic.

The blackened ruins of a grand mansion are a sad sight; Chicago in ashes was a sad sight; but, alas! a ruined soul is a much sadder one.

b. Because it will destroy *all* if left to itself. You cannot set fire to a stack of hay and say to the fire, “Now I want you to just burn one quarter or one half of the stack and no more,” and be obeyed. And you must not expect that sin will consume so far and no farther. That man is a fool who says to his son, “My son, drink all you want, use

the liquors in my house, *but never become a drunkard.*" He does not realize the tremendous power of temptation. "Can a man take fire into his bosom and not be burned?"

c. Because it consumes so quickly. I can believe almost anything of fire. You come and tell me there is a small fire down yonder in a house, just a few rags burning slowly; a little after you come and tell me the house is all in flames. I can believe it. In an hour you come and tell me a whole block is blazing. I can believe that too.

And just so with the progress of sin. You come to me some day and tell me that a young man is beginning to drink and swear; you come after a while and tell me he is attending low theaters and gambling houses, etc. You come again and tell me he has robbed his employer and ran away. I can believe that of sin. It is like a consuming fire.

5. *Sin is like Fire because it Can be Resisted and Put Out.*—The water of life, which is the grace of God, is able to quench the awful flames of sin. And men can be "pulled out of the fire." Have there not been "brands plucked from the burning"? This is the great work of our churches,—to put out the fires of sin and to rescue the perishing.

In all our cities we have our fire companies on duty day and night, ready at a moment's warning, at the risk of their lives to rush to the scene of danger. So God has his firemen. The different branches of the Christian church are his fire companies. O, how foolish God's people have often been! What would you think of firemen who, instead of trying to put out the fire and to save those in the burning building, should spend their time in debating how the fire originated, or should begin to dispute as to whose duty it was to put the fire out?

We must not only seek to put the fire out, but to pull men out of the flames. Work for closing the saloons, for shutting up the gambling hells, the houses of evil resort, but for the love of souls do not stop at this. Men are perishing. Sin is destroying them. Hasten, O hasten to their rescue.

The water will never fail. The reservoir is exhaustless. There is a never-failing supply. Enough for each, enough for all, enough forevermore. The firemen were beaten in the great Chicago fire because the supply of water gave out. There was but a limited supply in the district where the fire originated. It gave out; the baffled workers fell back and planted their engines in a new place; again it gave out; and this was repeated till the fire had gained such headway and power that no human power could arrest its onward march. But God's grace never fails.

“I want an ever strong desire,
I want an ever fervent zeal,
To pluck poor souls out of the fire,
And save them from a burning hell —
To point them to a pardoning God,
And quench the brands in Jesus' blood.”

THOMAS KELLY.

REASONS FOR MAKING A PUBLIC PRO- FESSION OF RELIGION.

Rom. 10 : 9, 10.

FROM the text, I shall speak of the *duty and privilege of making a public profession of religion*. Necessarily my words will apply to only a portion of the congregation,—those who believe themselves to have received forgiveness

of sin and who are at peace with God, and hereunto have neglected to make a public profession of their conversion, and declined uniting with the church of God.

Let me presume in respect to these friends that they are ready to do what God requires; they acknowledge his right over their wills and affections, and would have no plans or purposes contrary to his will and covenants. If God should come personally and audibly ask obedience to any requirement, you would gladly yield; and yet the Bible is the word of God in such a sense as if he were to speak to you out of the "burning bush," as to Moses, or from the clouds, as to Jesus.

If there are divine requirements you have not obeyed, it is because you have not been fully enlightened in respect to them, or because there are, what you consider, insuperable and unyielding difficulties in the way; and your reasons for setting aside such requirements are reasons you believe will satisfy your conscience in death and exonerate you in the great judgment. I presume, further, that as people who love God, you want to do all the good you can in the world for the glory of God and the help of your fellow-men. When you say you are converted, I have a right to presume those conditions respecting you. With this understanding of your character, I proceed to make the following statements:—

1. You ought to make a public profession of religion *because Jesus Christ requires it*. This obligation he solemnly placed on all who would be his disciples. He tolerated no excuse as sufficient to relieve the convert. He made it a test of love to him, and attached an awful retribution to a neglect or refusal to discharge it. Please read Matt. 10 : 32, 33, 37; Luke 11 : 23.

Nor was the fancy then unfamiliar that it was enough to be a secret disciple. Many believed who were fearful of

their lives if they made their conversion known. Jesus declared to them that his disciples must leave all and follow him; they must be as cities on the hilltop, seen by all; as candles in the house, shining for all; and if they declined such publicity, he disowned and denied them. Thus Jesus did not leave it optional whether his disciples should publicly confess him; but he declared it a privilege they should enjoy and a duty they should discharge; and he says: "If you love me keep my commandments;" "ye are my friends if you do whatsoever I have commanded you."

Moreover, Christ has also appointed the *methods and forms* in which the confession should be made, not only by a well-ordered life and behavior in the world, but also "*with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*" when the heart has believed. The disciples whom Jesus especially sent out as apostles, and who had been taught personally by him, certainly knew his mind, and were divinely inspired to carry out his plans.

They were commanded to go out and *preach the gospel*, and by that means to *make disciples* for Christ, and *baptize* those who believed. In the second chapter of Acts we see how rigidly those directions were carried out. By the great sermon of Peter there came a powerful revival; the 37th verse records how the converts came forward and publicly confessed their need of salvation. They were directed to "repent" and be "baptized;" and when this commandment was observed, they were added to the church, and united with the brethren in the "breaking of bread and in prayers," and lived to the glory of God. Those divine directions have not been changed one jot or tittle. *Aside from*, and *along with*, a personal Christian character, Jesus requires a *public profession* of conversion, and that the

believer should "be added to the church." Are you prepared to obey his directions? He is the true disciple who follows where his Master leads; who obeys when the Teacher commands.

2. A public profession is necessary in view of the *needs of the church* Jesus founded—the visible church whose members were to be converted believers. To the church, led by the Holy Spirit, he committed the interests of his kingdom on earth; through her Bible, her benevolence, her missionaries, and her prayers, is the gospel preached for the salvation of a lost world. The great conflict between light and darkness is waged through this divine army. We are Christians through influences that have come, directly or indirectly, from the church by Christian parents,—preaching, the Sabbath-school, or other means and agencies of divine grace. Without the church Jesus would not have the means of communicating his power.

To refuse to unite with the church is to withdraw from her so much strength and efficiency; it is to speak by example that we have no need of her; if all believers were to do so, the church must perish, and the agencies of the gospel derived from her would cease. The church never more than now needed to have her numbers strengthened by spiritual, obedient, and zealous converts, and those who refuse to come to her, deny her this help in a time of great need. Read Judges 5: 23.

3. The duty is important *because of its influence on the unbelieving world*. The growth and spirituality of the church in a community tend directly to conversions among the unsaved. When this condition is reversed, and conversions are few and additions to the church rare, Christians become discouraged, and the enemies of God rejoice. When a man comes out of a pleasure-loving community and from

among godless associates, and makes a public confession of repentance and faith toward God, it sends a shock of conviction through the community; and when such holy shocks come in quick succession, we have a revival of religion, and souls are saved. A secret, silent disciple of Christ has no such influence. What help was Peter to those unbelievers when he denied Christ? A clock may have an excellent machinery, its wheels may revolve with regularity, but it is of no service unless it has a face and hands to *profess* the hours of the day. Thus it is necessary that the inward life of the believer should be made manifest in his profession. One says he lets his *example* tell his life. True; but why not your words and public acts as well tell the story of Jesus?

Illustration: A man is restored to health by the skill of a physician. The rugged strength and robust body show his wholeness. But the sick and afflicted around him need to know *how* he was restored; who was the physician; what was the treatment and medicine. Such a knowledge must be imparted by *telling* the facts. A public profession of faith is the restored and redeemed soul telling the world of the grace and mercy that redeemed him. It ought to be our greatest joy "to tell the story of Jesus and his love." "Go home, and tell thy friends what the Lord has done for thee!"

4. The obligation is imperative *because of the need of the convert himself*. One of the great purposes Jesus had in establishing his church is the training and strengthening of believers. He knew their needs and the best way of providing for them.

a. Believers are helped by the *holy ordinances* of the church. Indeed, many do not come into the full experience of the joy of believing until a full obedience to God's

requirements in the ordinances is given. It was in the hours of his baptism that the Holy Spirit descended on the Master, and he was made to realize the approval of his Father. Hosts of Christians look back to the hour of their baptism and remember the divine joys that flooded their soul. What light streamed on them? How boldness took the place of fear! and they sing in remembrance of it,—

“O Happy Day that fixed my choice!”

Baptism marks the separation of the convert from one life and his consecration to another. It is like the uniform that marks the soldier from the mob and masses. It is the announcement of his union with Christ. Of such, God has connected a special blessing with it. In the Supper the believer is drawn into a closer communion with God. There is the working of a mysterious law by which the affections are spiritualized and intensified, and the character becomes assimilated to Jesus Christ. A fresh and vivid remembrance of Jesus and his atoning sacrifice, quickens the sympathies to stronger attachment to the great Saviour.

b. The church in her society is helpful to a Christian life. Man is a social being and he craves the companionship of those of like sympathy and aims. Such a nature needs to be met and nourished by a kindred social life. This the church furnishes in the communion of believers.

“Blest be the tie that binds!”

c. The convert needs the watch-care and guarding influence of the church. Religious expressions exposed to the influences of the world fade away. Uniting with the church places a barrier between the true convert and his return to the world. The great Napoleon was wont to burn the bridges after he crossed the rivers, and so cut off the possi-

bility of retreat. It is wise to place between ourselves and our old life the greatest difficulties in returning to it, and make it easier to go forward than to retreat. Many times it was well for the old Hebrews that the Red Sea rolled between them and the leeks and onions of Egypt; for in their weak hours they longed for their old bondage more than for the promised land. Learn a lesson of prudence, and place the church of Christ, and a public profession of Jesus between your former life and your present. Make it as difficult as possible to return to the old life of worldliness and sin.

Many and various are the apologies and excuses made for omitting this sacred duty of a public profession of religion; for when the natural heart controls the life, the brain is fertile in excuses, and men are sometimes led to believe they are conscientious in them. "Deeper feelings" and "greater light" are sought before "taking the step." Fears are expressed lest they "backslide" and bring dishonor on the holy Name. The answer is near: Greater blessings come to the souls along the path of his obedience; *light*, *assurance*, and *strength* are for God to give; it is for the disciple to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Test your excuses by the principles that govern you in secular life; put in your soul a judgment seat, and in the light of the word of God see if your excuses are not the enemies of your spiritual life.

Such questions are asked as, "Will an omission of a public profession endanger the soul's salvation?" "Cannot people be saved without baptism, and joining the church?" When such questions are asked with a view of a neglect of sacred privileges and duties, the questioner reveals a state of heart inconsistent with a regenerate state. While the salvation of the soul does not depend on forms or outward

services, it *does* depend on a condition of soul that prompts full obedience to God's requirements. A sincere love toward Jesus Christ is certainly a condition of salvation; but he who loves Christ will strive to keep his commandments. He who loves God, loves the brethren — the children of God — and he will want to unite with them when he knows his duty and privilege. The sentiment of the redeemed heart is not, — “What *must* I do to be saved?” but, “What can I do to please God and manifest my love to him.”

H. O. ROWLANDS.

REVIVALS.

“Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee?”
Ps. 85 : 6.

I WILL first explain the meaning of the word “revival.” The word “revival” in the Bible means to be quickened — to be made alive. We have an illustration in 2 Kings 13: 21, where a number of young men were burying a dead comrade and were overtaken by a band of Moabitish robbers, who pursued them, and in making haste, they threw the body of the dead man into a pit. The corpse came in contact with the bones of a dead prophet and was thus restored to life, and he followed his companions fleeing from the Moabites.

A revival always begins with God's people in the church. While in a cold and lukewarm state, the Holy Spirit cannot use them for the salvation of the lost and for the glory of God; therefore they have to be quickened — made alive, so that they can be used by the Holy Spirit in leading the lost in the way of life and salvation.

1. *Some Objections Against Revivals Answered.*— A child of God, who is led by the Holy Spirit, and who is living for Christ and not for the world, will not bring any serious objection against a genuine revival. The only revival I believe in is one born of the Holy Ghost in answer to the prayer of faith. A very common objection brought against revivals by worldly-minded church-members and others is that there is too much excitement in connection with them. The same people will become excited when there is sickness and death in the family; they will become excited when there is a railway accident; they will become excited during a political campaign in advocating the claims of their candidate for office; they become greatly excited and aroused, and use all their power to convince every one that they should vote for their candidate in order to save their party and country; and they are never weary of advocating the claims of their party ticket.

Men become excited when there is a run on the banks, especially if they have any funds there; but the word of God claims that believers on the Lord Jesus Christ should be “instant in season and out of season,” that they should “present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service.” Since Christ died for all because all were dead, therefore they who live should not live unto themselves but for him who died and rose again.” We have an example in the apostle Paul who preached the gospel in one city three whole years, night and day, warning the people with tears in the synagogue and from house to house, and he claimed that the love of Christ constrained him. That was the moving power; and he furthermore claimed that we are all ambassadors for Christ, that we are here in Christ’s stead, praying men to be reconciled to God.

Another objection that is brought against revivals is that converts do not hold out. I once heard Mr. D. L. Moody ask the late Dr. Andrew Bonar, of Glasgow, this question : "Brother Bonar, how long have you been engaged in evangelistic work in Scotland?" and he gave the answer, "Over fifty years." Again he asked : "Did the people who were converted in the revivals in Scotland remain as steadfast and as faithful as those who were converted in ordinary times when there was no special interest?" Dr. Bonar's answer was : "In my experience those that were converted in times of great awakening were far more faithful and became more useful Christians than any other class." The faithfulness of the converts depends largely upon the pastor and the members of the church. If the converts are well cared for by the members, they will remain steadfast and become useful members of the church of Christ; but should they be neglected by the older members of the church and by the pastor, then you may expect that some of them will backslide, that their love will wax cold. What would you think of a nurse who would put a young infant in the arms of a dead mother to be cared for and to be fed? How long could the infant live? Can you expect young converts will become steadfast and grow in grace while living among cold-hearted, worldly-minded church members?

This same objection can be brought against the personal labors of our Saviour while on earth, for very many of those that professed faith under his personal labors went back again to the world and followed him no more. At one time so many of those that professed faith in him left him that he turned sadly to the twelve apostles and said, "Will ye also go away?" People who object to revivals and are not in sympathy with them will always watch for

an opportunity to find fault and bring some accusation against an evangelist and revivals. They generally lose sight of those that remain steadfast and become useful members of the church. They generally lose sight of their lives and do not see any of their good works; but should one backslide and go back again, even if it is only one out of a hundred, they will magnify this case and point the finger of scorn, and say, "I told you so; just as I expected."

2. *When are Revivals Needed in the Church?*—When the members have become worldly-minded, cold-hearted, or disheartened; become weary of well-doing, and are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; have the form of godliness but deny the power thereof; then it is time that there should be revivals. When the members of the church neglect the prayer meeting and the means of grace; neglect the service of the church of God, and only attend when they feel like going; never go when they are too tired; never go when it is dark and stormy; never go when it is too cold; never go when it is too warm; never go when they do not feel well; never go when they have company; never go when meetings are dull;—when this is the condition of things in the church, revivals are needed to save the church from disgrace and from the loss of power to do good in the world.

A revival is needed when some of the members of the church prefer a social gathering, the theater, the opera, or a card party to the prayer meeting. A revival is needed when there is bickering and strife prevailing among the brethren; when frequent conversions are not taking place; when there are no conversions in the Sunday-school; when the teachers have become careless and indifferent to the

conversion of those under their charge; a revival is needed when the prayer meetings have become dull and stupid and only few take part or interest in the meeting.

3. *How shall we Promote Revivals?* — By the members of the church searching their own hearts in the light of God's word, and by the help of the Holy Spirit; and by each one earnestly praying, "O Lord, reveal to me my true condition and my relation to thee, my relation to the church, and to the world." Each should ask, "What am I living for? Who am I living for? Has God any claim upon my life?" Then earnestly pray, "Search me, O Lord; see if there be any evil way within me. Cleanse me and wash me from my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." Also pray, "Restore to me the joys of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit; teach me," etc.

The work of revivals must begin first with God's own people. We must put all evil away from us and wash our hands, so that we can meet God face to face. We must get right with God, and when we are right with him, we can easily lead our fellow-men to Christ. We should be much in prayer and self-examination. We should humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God, and daily pray, "Lead thou me, teach me thy ways, direct my steps. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Again, we should remove every obstacle and every hindrance in the church, in the family, and, in so far as we can, remove every obstacle that would hinder sinners from coming to Christ. Christ said to the friends while standing at the grave of Lazarus, "Take ye away the stone." After the stone was removed, then Jesus called the dead to life. So now in the church; after we have removed all ob-

stacles and all hindrances, and prepared the way for the Lord, made a straight path for his feet, he will come with mighty power and call the dead to life.

4. *Some Results that will Follow a Genuine Revival.*—There will be increase of love among the brethren. Prayer meetings will become better attended. Christians will become more active in their labors for the Master. There will be an increase in the congregation; strangers will flock to the house of God; sinners will be converted, and great joy will be in the church.

Let us all labor and pray to promote such a revival.

H. W. BROWN.

THE POWER OF GOD AND THE WISDOM OF MAN.

Read 1 Cor. 1 : 18-31.

“That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” 1 Cor. 2 : 5.

IN the context the apostle tells us that his preaching was “not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” He did this that the faith of his converts “should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” Our faith rests in the power of God as manifested,—

1. *In the Fulfillment of Prophecy.*

a. Take the Prophecy concerning Ishmael. He was to be a wild man, whose hand was to be against every man, and every man’s hand was to be against him. He was to be the head of a great nation. He was to dwell in tents in

the presence of his brethren. This prophecy was spoken 3700 years ago, and is still in process of fulfillment. What man by earthly wisdom could have foretold the future of the lad perishing of thirst in the wilderness?

b. Concerning the Jews, Moses predicted that they were to be scattered among all nations, and yet were to be preserved a separate and distinct people. They were to become a by-word, a reproach, and a hissing. They were to endure untold sufferings by famine and seige, and mothers were to eat their own children. This was spoken 3000 years ago, and history shows its fulfillment.

c. Concerning Tyre, Ezekiel said, "Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets." Eze. 26 : 3-5.

Of old Tyre not a vestige remains. Three centuries before Christ, the city was taken by Alexander the Great, who immediately proceeded to besiege New Tyre on the island. Not being able to reach its walls with his engines, he collected the remains of the old city,—stones, timber, rubbish,—threw them into the narrow channel, and they formed a causeway. A traveler writes, "The site of Tyre is as bare as the top of a rock; and here and there I saw the fisherman spreading their nets upon the shore, to dry in the bright sunshine." It took 2500 years for the complete fulfillment of the prophecy. In the fifth century a devout Jewish writer spoke of the beauty and greatness of Tyre and of the unfulfilled prophecy of Ezekiel; but in the twelfth century the sultan sent an army against it, and Tyre was literally swept into the sea.

2. *In the Life of Christ* — as seen at his birth, at his baptism, in his miracles. He healed the sick, cured the blind, raised the dead, calmed the sea; at his death, the heavens were darkened at mid-day, the veil of the temple was rent, the dead arose; at his resurrection, the seal was broken, the stone rolled away, and Jesus arose and walked out upon the dewy grass, under the starlit sky, to hail the brightest morn that ever dawned upon our sin-burdened earth.

3. *In the Believer's Experience* — In the hour of his conversion, when "old things passed away and behold all things became new." In the witness of the Spirit in his soul, and in providential deliverances from sin and danger, well may we say, "Our faith does not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." "I am not ashamed of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation."

C. P.

CONDITIONS OF BEING SAVED.

"What must I do to be saved." Acts 16 : 30.

I. WHAT SINNERS MUST NOT DO TO BE SAVED.

1. They must not imagine they have nothing to do.
2. You should not mistake what you have to do.
3. Do not say or imagine that you cannot do what God requires.
4. Do not procrastinate.
5. You must not wait for God to do what he commands you to do.
6. You must not wait for God to do anything whatever.

7. Do not flee to any refuge of lies.
8. Do not seek for any self-indulgent method of salvation.
9. Do not imagine you will ever have a more favorable time.
10. Do not suppose that you will find another time as good, and one in which you can just as well repent as now.
11. If you ever expect to be saved, don't wait to see what others will do or say.
12. You must not indulge prejudice against either God, or his ministers, or against Christians, or against anything religious.

II. WHAT THE SINNER MUST DO TO BE SAVED.

1. You must understand what you have to do.
2. You must return and confess your sins to God.
3. You must renounce yourself. This implies —
 - a. That you renounce your own righteousness forever.
 - b. That you relinquish the idea of having done any good which ought to commend you to God, or be a ground of your justification.
 - c. That you renounce your own will.
 - d. That you renounce your own way and let God have his.
4. You must come to Christ. You must accept of Christ as *your Saviour*.
5. You must seek supremely to please Christ, and not yourself.
6. You must have all confidence in Christ, or you cannot be saved.
7. You must forsake all that you have, or you cannot be Christ's disciple.

REMARKS.

1. Take care that you do not sin willfully after having understood the truth concerning the way of salvation.

2. Do not wait even to go home, before you obey God. Make up your mind now, and at once close in with the offer of salvation.

3. The jailer made no excuse when he knew his duty; in a moment he yielded.

You have now been told what you must not do and what you must do to be saved; *are you prepared to act?* Sinner, the infinite God waits for your consent!

C. G. FINNEY.

THE DAY OF SALVATION.

“*To-day.*” *Heb. 4:7.*

THERE are great days in every life; birthdays, commencement-days, attaining one's majority, wedding-days, etc. There are crisis-days, black Fridays, escapes, recovery, battle days. The greatest day is the day for one's salvation. It is a crisis-day. Every one has such a day. Some saved can name it — as Finney, Spurgeon, — the very time and place.

1. *A Day for Salvation is Set for Every One.* — God foresees and arranges all about it. “Not a sparrow falleth,” etc., etc. Every life is mapped out before him, — birth, events, death. So for salvation; God names that day; we cannot change it. It comes when and how he orders.

2. *The Issues of That Day.* — The soul compared with all else. Eternity its duration. Multiply grains of sand

by drops of water; that by the leaves of the forest; that by the stars of heaven. The salvation of the soul means its destiny during eternity. All depends on the issues of that "day." Compare all other days with that.

3. *When one May Know his "Day" has Come.*—When he has *light*; sees his need of salvation; sees himself a sinner; hears the declaration of the scriptures, "All have sinned"—"There is none righteous." Again: that day has come when he has had *time*; time to consider and decide; not a long time, but enough. It means opportunity—a full offer of the gospel.

4. *That Day Ends.*—It is not forever. "He limiteth a certain day." The longest day has an end. The soul's day ends long before life's crisis. "There is a line by man unseen that crosses every path." God's day ends. Israel's opportunity to enter the promised land is the reference of the text. They lost that in a few hours, and never was it renewed to that generation.

5. *Your Day is Before You.*—"Now is the day of salvation." Your day has come—the day for which all other days were made, for which you were born, and for which you live; the day on which your destiny is to be decided. God leaves the choice to you. "As thou choosest, so it shall be." But he graciously aids by the Spirit, by Christian friends, by the means of grace. Decide this moment.

ALEXANDER PATTERSON.

EUREKA.

*"We have found the Messiah; which is, being interpreted, the Christ."
John 1: 41.*

THIS word "Eureka" is made famous by Archimedes, the mathematician, who in a great ecstasy cried it out, when he had found out the secret of King Hero's crown; but much more famous by Andrew, in the text, who upon finding Christ, came running to Peter with Archimedes' word, "We have found him! We have found him!"

I. WHAT IT IS TO FIND CHRIST.

1. There is a saving discovery of Christ made to the soul by the Holy Ghost. The mind enlightened discerns: (1) A transcendent glory in him; (2) A suitableness, both to God's glory and its own particular case; (3) An ability and willingness to save.

2. This saving discovery being made, immediately the soul closes with Christ, and is united to him by the Spirit and faith.

II. WHAT THEY FIND WHO FIND CHRIST, THAT FILLS THEM WITH SUCH JOY.

(1.) Life. Prov. 8: 35. (2.) Liberty. John 8: 36. (3.) Treasure. Matt. 13: 44. (4.) Rest. Matt. 11: 28, 29. (5.) Refuge. Isa. 32: 2. (6.) A portion. Ps. 142: 6. All things necessary to their eternal happiness and welfare.

USES.

1. Acknowledge and applaud the happiness of those who have found Christ.

2. Search and examine whether ye have found him. If so, ye will prize the discovery. Ye will love and esteem

him above all things; ye will get other views of sin and of self than ever ye had before. Ye will earnestly desire greater discoveries of him.

3. I exhort you to seek Christ, and not to give over till ye have found him. What a mercy that God will be found of you! If ye will not seek him now, the time will come when ye shall seek him, and he will not be found of you.
 Prov. 1: 24. THOMAS BOSTON.

BEHOLD! WHAT MANNER OF LOVE!

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 3: 1.

BEHOLD, what manner of love! Who can describe it?
 It is new every morning; it is fresh every evening.

“Angels assist our mighty joys,
 Strike all your harps of gold;
 But when you raise your highest notes,
 His love can ne’er be told.”

That was a beautiful thought of the poor lunatic in the asylum, which he wrote upon a pane of glass in his cell:—

“Could we with ink the the ocean fill,
 And were the skies of parchment made;
 Were every stem on earth a quill,
 And every man a scribe by trade,
 To write the love of God would the ocean dry,
 Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
 Though stretched from sky to sky.”

It is recorded of a Malabar convert who was assisting a missionary in translating the New Testament into his

native language, that when he came to this verse, he dropped his pen and exclaimed: "There must be some mistake here; I cannot write that; it is too much; it cannot be that I, so great a sinner, am a son of the great and good God." But it is true nevertheless. "We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

We shall never know how great the love was that brought the Lord of glory from heaven to earth, till we enter the eternal world; for the measure of his self-abnegation is that of his original exaltation.

Were we to listen to every hymn that has ever been sung in praise of God's love; to every sermon that has ever been preached to proclaim it, and were we then to be transported to heaven, we would exclaim as did Sheba's queen in the presence of Solomon, "The half was never told."

"Sons of God!" not merely by adoption but by creation; for we were "created anew in Christ Jesus." There are three births: *The birth into the natural world; the birth into the spiritual world (John 3:3); and the birth into the world of glory.* "And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones," etc. Matt. 19:28.

This love is wonderful, because—

1. It was love for inferior objects.
2. It was love for rebels.
3. It was love unsolicited.
4. There was nothing in us that was lovely.
5. There was nothing in us that was loving.

It is natural to fallen nature to love them that love us, "but God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." "We love him because he first loved us." To love our enemies is a

plant that never grew in nature's garden. It is winter; come with me and I will show you a wonder. Suppose I could show you plants and flowers growing and blooming out of the ice that covers the rivers! would you not call that a wonder? But behold I show you a greater marvel—a man praying for his enemies, "Father forgive them."

C. P.

THE PLOW FOR THE FALLOW GROUND.

"For thus saith the Lord, to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns." Jer. 4:3.

1. *The Hearts of Unregenerate Men are like Fallow Ground.*—It was once plowed and sown—it now brings forth only briars and thorns; it must be plowed and sown, or it will bring no bread. Be convinced of this, that you have souls poor and empty of that which is good; be humbled, that you have so long continued a fallow ground. Do not remain in this state. How bad it will be not to be plowed and sown! Such will be Satan's husbandry. They will bitterly provoke God to anger. If you continue thus, you will be fit only for destruction.

2. *It is the Duty of Unregenerate Men to Break Up their Fallow Ground,*—That is to be deeply convinced of sin, much affected by it. There must be a plow to do this—the word. It must cut deep. This truth must wound the heart,—that by nature we are "dead in trespasses and sins," "children of wrath," unmindful of God, and enemies to him, captives of the devil—prisoners. Let this wound your souls,—that you go so far from God, that you do evil in his sight, that all your sins are marked. God can make malefactors appear before his tribunal; they cannot fly, nor

hide. Let the mercy of God in Christ wound and break our hearts.

Why must our fallow ground be broken up? — That our carnal self-confidence may be mortified and rooted out, that Satan's work in us be destroyed, that we be made fit patients for Christ, that we be fitted to receive the good seed of the gospel; that we may seek the Lord in earnest (Hosea 10:12); that we be filled with the fruits of righteousness; that we may have a plentiful harvest.

If we plow not our fallow ground, God may let loose cruel plowmen on us. Micah 3:12. Those that refuse shall beg alms for mercy, and be rejected. Prov. 20:4.

Examine yourselves. Has God's word cut into your hearts? Have you received the seed of the word? Does it bring forth fruit in your lives?

If you be fallow, you will grow worse and worse. If you plow not for God, you plow for Satan. It is honorable to bear fruit for God. Be humbled that you have so long lain fallow. When you begin to break up your fallow ground, seek the assistance of the Holy Spirit

S. TOMLYNS.

[J. Richards Dodge, of Washington, declares that the soils of arid regions are generally *fertile to excess*. *Depletion* of valuable elements, rather than accretion, tends to their improvement. One thing only is lacking to make most of the arid lands of our great country fruitful, and that is water — simply water. Mr. Dodge proves his declaration by pointing to the wide areas of our watered plains, once remarkable for nothing except the Indian and the buffalo that inhabited them, and which have now become veritable gardens. "And yet a single year," he says, "suffices to produce this change."

So it is with the question of moral culture among the vast wastes of humanity in our great cities; and men point to them declaring that their lamentably arid condition requires the "accretion" of many valuable and spiritual elements; when the real truth is that these human wastes are, many of them, "fertile to excess" already, and only require the application of the *water of everlasting life* to make the desert "blossom as the rose."]

GEO. V. REICHEL.

THE SICK MAN CURED.

"*The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.*" *Mark 2: 10.*
Narrative, Mark 2: 1-12; Matt. 9: 1-8; Luke 5: 18-26.

Son of Man.—See Gen. 3: 15. Covenant with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, David,—all fulfilled in Christ. Dan. 7: 13, 14.

Hath Power.—Matt. 28: 18; John 5: 23-26, 27.

To Forgive Sins.—This the reason of his becoming Son of man. Heb. 2: 9; 14: 15; Phil. 2: 7, 8; Heb. 9: 26.

Having fulfilled the law by his offering, he now exercises his power for the purpose of forgiving sin and saving from its power. Heb. 10: 19-22; 1 John 3: 8; Acts 5: 31; Acts 10: 42, 43; Acts 13: 38, 39.

"He preached the word unto them." Mark 2: 2.

This was Christ's great work. See Mark 1: 38; Luke 4: 15-22; Ps. 40: 9, 10; Heb. 2: 3. Miracles were incidental, attestational, and illustrative.

Man sick of palsy like the world when Christ came. "Dead in sins." Eph. 2: 1. Four dispensations had preceded them. All testified of him. All united in pointing the

world to him. Patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings — their testimony, as brought out in the Old Testament, simply unites in laying a sin-cursed, groaning world at his feet. No power in themselves.

So what is true of *the mass*, is true of *the individual*, and only true of *the mass* because *without exception* true of *the individual*.

The sick of the palsy represents the sinner without Christ.

Nature of disease. Life has departed. Circulation of blood thrown from the heart is checked, and power to give life not felt.

No *feeling* — no *motion* — no *enjoyment* — no *preservative power*. Four things true of the sinner without the life of God in his soul.

Outside remedies unavailing. No response from dead flesh. God alone can quicken. So they brought the man to Christ.

1. Forgiveness; then healing in attestation of authority to confer first.

Testimony of healed man:—

a. Sins forgiven; knew it upon Christ's word.

b. Power of sin gone; knew it in the absence of old disease and use of new powers.

Showing, second, *encouragements*. A willing Saviour; a powerful Saviour; a certain cure.

Close with picture of this man at feet of Jesus. He had to receive by faith the message of forgiveness. He acted in faith when he arose and went forth.

So now. Believe the message — your sins are forgiven. Commence at once to obey Christ's commands. Confess; pray; preach. He will give the power.

D. W. WHITTLE.

THE TWO KNOCKINGS.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me.” *Rev. 3 : 20.*

“Lord, Lord, open to us.” *Matt. 25 : 11.*

1. We have in these two passages a startling contrast. One represents Jesus standing at the door of men’s hearts, knocking for admission there, and the other shows us those who have refused to hear his voice pleading for admission into his kingdom. One refers to time, the other to the morning of eternity.

2. The verse taken from the Revelation is addressed to the angel or minister of the church at Laodicea.

a. One great sin of this church was *lukewarmness*, verse 15.

b. Another sin was *vanity*, verse 17.

c. But although the church is so degraded, Christ *loves* it still. Verses 19, 20.

3. But now the scene is changed. The church, roused at last, knocks at heaven’s gate, and pleads, “Lord, Lord, open to us.” But then it is “TOO LATE.”

4. What is true of churches is also true of *individuals*.

I. THE FACT THAT THE HEART OF MAN IN ITS NATURAL STATE IS CLOSED AGAINST CHRIST

Through —

1. *Ignorance.*
2. *Thoughtlessness.*
3. *Unbelief.*
4. *Willfulness.*

II. JESUS LONGS TO POSSESS THE HEART OF MAN.

1. He *represents himself as a stranger seeking admission, not as one who has a right to enter.*

2. *Indicate the various ways by which Jesus seeks to gain admission into the heart.*

III. MARK THE CONDESCENSION AND LOVE OF JESUS.

1. The King of heaven *comes to us* — does not wait until we go to him.

2. Look at his attitude. “*He stands*” in the position of a suppliant.

3. His unwearied importunity. “*Behold I stand.*”

IV. HE RECOGNIZES MAN'S FREE AGENCY.

“If any man hear my voice and open the door.”

1. What barriers are often placed against the door to keep Christ out.

a. Self-interest.

b. Friends.

c. Inclination.

2. Appeal to those who hesitate to withdraw all bars and bolts, and let the waiting Saviour in.

V. HOW EASY ARE THE TERMS OF SALVATION.

“If any man *hear* my voice and *open* the door *I will come in.*”

If some great thing were required, people would try to save themselves by doing it; but because it is only “*to hear a voice*” and “*to open a door,*” men are lost.

VI. THE BLESSED ASSURANCE.

“I will come into him.” This suggests —

1. *Intimate communion.*

2. *Closest friendship.*

3. *Highest honor.*

VII. THE FEARFUL RESPONSIBILITY.

"Lord, Lord, open to us." You must either receive it now, or be refused by him *at the last*.

A. F. BARFIELD.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME "JESUS."

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. 1:21.

FEW children are named before their birth; but Cyrus, Josiah, John the Baptist, and Jesus were. Most Bible names are significant, but this name most of all. It expressed the special design of his mission to our world. This was not to *work miracles*, nor to *heal the sick*, nor to *teach moral truths*, nor to be a *great exemplar*, important as all these were, but to save men from their sins.

Jesus means "Saviour," and is the sweetest of all names. The Father gave him "a name which is above every name." Why did he come to save us from sin?

1. *Because He Alone can Save from Sin.*—Sin, when committed, becomes so much a part of our nature that it is beyond all human or angelic power to release us from its thrall and consequences.

2. *Because of the Spreading and Corrupting Nature of Sin.*—In the Old Testament it was symbolized by leprosy, which spread and corrupted the whole body.

3. *Because God Hates Sin.*—This is the only thing in all the universe that he hates. Wherever it is mentioned in the Scriptures, whether by prophet, historian, psalmist, or apostle, language is all too weak to express God's feel-

ings in regard to it. Sin drove the angels that rebelled out of heaven, our first parents out of Eden, and will debar every one having the least taint of it from eternal blessedness and union with God.

We get the most vivid impression of God's abhorrence of sin in Gethsemane, when Christ "sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," and cried, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." This shrinking was not from physical suffering and shame, great and awful as they were, but because, in order to save man, "He who knew no sin" must "become sin" for him. This is what forced from Christ on the cross the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" This is the saddest cry that ever fell upon human ears. O, we may think sin a light and trivial thing but not so did God regard it when he looked upon the cross.

4. *Because Saved from Sin we are Saved from All its Consequences.*—Saved from sin, we are saved from wretchedness and misery here and in the world to come. Nothing can keep a soul from God and blessedness when saved from sin.

TWO INFERENCES.

1. Moral character is the great object of God's government, and Jesus' redemptive work. Above all things Christ came to make men holy.

2. If Jesus saves from sin, when should this salvation take place? When does he want to save us? At death? No! but now; this very moment.

D. H. COOLEY

CLOUDS AND RAINBOW.

"It shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be in the cloud." Gen. 9 : 14.

To all in whose memory the destruction of the world by water was fresh, the appearance of a cloud would portend evil. While the cloud thus spoke to them of sin and death, God chose another preacher to proclaim at the same time his goodness and mercy. On the dark background of wrath, he paints for us a beautiful picture of lovingkindness. "It shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be in the cloud;" that their fear might give place to hope.

This is a world of clouds, but to the eye of faith there is a bow on every cloud, and it is my purpose to look with you at these bows of promise.

Sin is a cloud. Here is a bow of promise upon the original sin: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." The sin we inherited from Adam is all atoned for by the death of Christ without faith on our part. The infant that dies goes to heaven, because the death it has received from Adam is removed by the death of Christ. In Christ it is made alive to the same extent that it dies in Adam. We cannot be lost for Adam's sin. Christ is "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The darkness of sin in Adam is banished by His righteousness from every infant's life; and every mother who has laid away her child, is permitted to gaze with delight upon this bow of promise on the cloud of her bereavement. David saw it when he said: "I shall go to him, but he cannot return to me."

The darkest of all clouds, however, is our own sins, but it is spanned by a bow of the brightest promise; and, as in the rainbow, there are seven colors blending into each other, I see on the cloud of my sins seven promises which blend into one, and make such a bow of beauty as only God's hand can paint: —

1. The first color is *forgiveness*. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” Guilt is a cloud black as night. Confess it to God and at once his forgiveness shines upon you. No prayer is demanded. Confession is the best sort of praying. It implies faith and penitence. A simple confession of a fault by your child without any prayer for pardon would make you hasten to forgive, and this forgiveness comes only through Christ. “Him hath God exalted . . . to give forgiveness of sins.” “Through him is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.” Trying to atone for your sins by penance only adds blackness to the cloud.

2. The next color in this bow of promise is *cleansing*: “The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.” Sin defiles. It pollutes the soul. If we could be forgiven without cleansing, we should be unfit for association with the pure in heaven.

3. Though forgiven and cleansed, the fact remains that we have once been guilty and defiled; but we are through Christ *justified*. We have been treated now as if we had never sinned. In God's eye we are pure. We have been made “the righteousness of God in him.” This is a color, bright indeed, on the dark cloud of sin's guilt and defilement.

4. And yet the color grows brighter still. Our sins are to be *covered ocean-deep*. “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” On the surface and in the

shallows the ocean is turbulent; and in the shallows it may cast up mire and dirt, but there are depths which are never disturbed by any storm. Into these depths our sins have been cast by the pierced hand of Christ, and they will never be thrown up to condemn us, for "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."

5. A brighter color still is the fact that the very depths into which our sins are cast are *infinitely removed* from us. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." The east and the west can never be brought together. No more can the sins of a believer be brought against him.

6. Brighter still: our sins are *blotted out*. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." In heaven there is no cloud; only the rainbow remains. Sin is forever gone. Holiness reigns.

7. Still brighter grows our bow of promise, when we are told that our sins are *not to be mentioned* to us. "All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him." Pardoned criminals not unfrequently have their sins thrown up to them. Their enemies may delight in reminding them that, though pardoned now, they have, nevertheless, committed sin. Not so when God has forgiven. Neither he nor angels will ever mention our sins!

A. C. DIXON.

GIDEON.

Judges 6.

THERE are three periods in the history of this remarkable man which are full of instruction.

1. The first is recorded in verse 11:—

“And Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.”

This is the first time that he is introduced to us, and that he was a man who feared the Lord is evident from the following reasons:—

a. The Lord appeared to him and commissioned him to deliver his people. It is true that it is said “an angel” appeared to him; but this angel is called *Jehovah*, not *Adonai*, a title never applied to any created being. He was the Angel of the covenant.

b. Gideon appears to have been familiar with the history of God’s people, and the mighty miracles he had wrought in former days for their deliverance.

But he seems to have been a secret worshiper. His father was an idolator; a worshiper of Baal, and we have no reason to suppose that previous to this time Gideon had ever taken any public stand on the Lord’s side. He had faith, but it was weak, and he threshed wheat in secret that he might hide it from the Midianites.

Now it may be, dear hearer, that you too are one whom the Lord has blessed with the knowledge of himself. In your soul there is a joy, a peace, and a hope that is to you most precious, and yet you have kept it to yourself. You thresh a little wheat—God’s wheat—and for fear of men hide it in a secret place.

Your secret worship gladdens Satan, disheartens God's people, and encourages the skeptic and the scoffer. O, take a stand for your Master; come out openly on the Lord's side.

2. The second is recorded in verse 27:—

“And so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.”

Here was an advance. His faith had increased, but it was still weak. The Lord had commanded him to overthrow the altar of Baal that his father had built, and offer sacrifices to them. The man-fearing spirit still haunted him, and so he did it by night.

Nevertheless it was a bold and decisive step; it was as if he had said, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

In the morning there was great excitement in the town. “And when it was told them that Gideon, the son of Joash, had done this thing,” they demanded that the father bring out his son to be put to death. The old man refused; we fancy he felt a thrill of joy to find there was one brave enough to take a stand for God and righteousness. His answer was, “If he be a god, let him plead for himself; and if not, let those who plead for him be put to death.”

In like manner, dear hearer, should you make a public profession of religion. There may be great excitement among your neighbors and old companions, and yet it may be that those whom you most fear will be the first to bid you God-speed.

3. The third is recorded in verse 34:—

“But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, and Abiezar was gathered unto him.”

He is no longer alone, and he goes about his work no longer in the gloom and darkness of night. He blows with a trumpet the shrill blast of war. O how his faith has increased.

Who is this man around whom the thousands of Israel are gathering in battle array? — It is Gideon, who for fear of man threshed wheat and hid it by the wine-press.

Who is this that on yonder lonely mountain-top prepares to offer up his son, his only son, as a burnt offering? — It is Abraham who taught Sarah to tell a lie for fear of man.

Who is this that stands in the midst of the Jewish rulers and charges them with the murder of the Son of God, the Lord's Messiah? — It is Peter, who for fear denied his Lord.

“Lord, increase our faith.”

SALVATION THROUGH THE MIGHTY NAME.

Acts 4: 12, 13.

THE awful crucifixion near Jerusalem occurred nearly two months before the words were uttered which are recorded in our text. All Jerusalem had partially quieted; for though there were rumors that the chief victim was not in the grave, yet only a few of his nearest friends had personal knowledge that he was alive again.

Suddenly miraculous works began to astonish the people, such as Jesus the Nazarene had wrought. These were amazing common people and awakening wrath in the rulers. They came to pass through illiterate, humble men, disciples of the lowly, hated Nazarene. Two of the

fishermen having been the agents in the healing of a lame beggar, were arrested, imprisoned, and threatened — not for the good deed, but for the use of a Name that was written on the cross of the noted Nazarene.

Peter and John, arraigned before the angry judges, were compelled to reveal their authority and power. The name they gave was one most despised by the Jewish rulers. It caused their wrath to boil. They scorned the name and authority and report of the resurrection. Peter was used by the Holy Spirit to give utterance to the first of the two verses of our text. Salvation's source is defined.

I love to use a *word* to fasten my text in your memory. The word now is "*name*." If any man is saved he must be saved by another person than himself. God in his book makes use of names as significant of a person's character or office. He saw fit to make salvation easy on our part, however costly and difficult on his part. He made it complete, full, and free, to whosoever humbly and penitently accepts it. Setting all eyes on the Person whose name he exalted while it was execrated by his brethren, the Holy Spirit fixes this truth, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other *name* under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

This name is manifold, meeting every necessity. Jesus Christ's titles immensely out-number those of any prince or potentate known to men, though many are decorated and titled astonishingly. In the volume of the Book of God's dear Son he has more titles than the days in our year.

Notice how the Holy Spirit prophesied of the names of this Saviour. Isa. 9:6. God laid help upon One that is mighty. Just before his birth the angel gave him his sweet name, and just after, the angel revealed his richer, mightier names. Luke 2:11. When his death and resur-

rection occurred, the Holy Spirit verified his titles. Acts 2:36.

Now let us see how Scripture holds up to our view the key-word of our text.—*Name*.

“None other name.” Saved by this name,—

1. From sin. Matt. 1:21; Acts 10:43; 1 John 2:12.

2. From death. John 1:12; 20:31; 1 John 5:13.

3. From judgment. Heb. 9:27, 28; John 3:18; 5:24.

To such as trust in this name is given access to the grace throne and at last to the glory throne. John 14:15; 16:22-25; Rev. 3:21.

Many a man knows that the name of some wealthy or influential friend has saved him from loss of property, liberty, or credit. None of us has any access to God and heaven by his own name. But the name of God's Son admits us to the holiest of all.

We see by our other verse,—“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Three year's fellowship with Jesus before his glorification gave them no such boldness. Forty days with the risen Jesus, and the gift of baptism by his Holy Spirit, took away all their timidity, clothing them with power and boldness. Many men are timid in their first open confession of Jesus, because they know not fellowship with the *living* Saviour, and the possession of his spirit. Lay hold on these.

J. W. DEAN.

PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE SOCIETY OF THE WICKED.

"Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men."
Ps. 26: 9.

THE convincing proof of a man's regeneration is his detestation of sin, and his shunning the company of the wicked.

I. THE GROUND OF THE PSALMIST'S PLEA.

This is given in the preceding verse. He declares before God,—

1. That he trusted in him (verse 1); that is, he had faith in God, and this faith was active.

2. It produced integrity—that is, holy, upright conduct.

3. He invoked divine investigation of his conduct. Verse 2.

4. He delighted in the divine loving-kindness as the source of his felicity. Verse 3.

5. He avoided evil associations, nay, hated the congregations of evil doers. Verses 6–8.

Therefore, in consideration of his dependence on God alone for salvation as evidenced in his life, he beseeches God, saying, "Gather not my soul," etc.

II. THE IMPORT OF HIS PRAYER.

It implies,—

1. A belief in the immortality of the soul. The body must perish, but "the spirit" shall return unto God who gave it." That which is immortal must be of infinite value, consequently—

2. He is more concerned about the soul than the body. Jesus said, "Fear not them that kill the body."

3. A conviction that the souls of all men will be gathered into eternity, and that the righteous and wicked will be gathered into separate states of existence.

4. A conviction that God might justly gather the soul with sinners. "If thou Lord, should mark iniquity, O Lord, who should stand?"

5. That unless God undertook for him, he would be gathered with sinners.

III. THE REASONS FOR HIS PECULIAR DREAD OF BEING THUS GATHERED.

1. On account of their character — "Sinners and bloody men." The world is full of such men now. There is nothing in reason or in nature to suggest that death will produce any change in them for the better. On the contrary, their passions will be left largely unchecked and unrestrained. How many things tend to hold a man in check in a sinful course while on earth; such as conscience, family ties, the love of respectability, the laws of the land, the influences of the gospel, etc. But all these will be removed in the world to come.

2. On account of their awful doom. "The wicked shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God." Their doom will be an awful display of God's power and justice. Paul says, "God will show forth his wrath, and make his power known in the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction."

3. This prayer is prompted by the hope which anticipates the joys of the redeemed, "O gather me to thy presence where there is fullness of joy, and to thy right hand where there are pleasures forevermore."

ANONYMOUS.

THE TWO GARDENS.

“*And the Lord God planted a garden eastward, and there he put the man whom he had formed.*” Gen. 2: 8.

“Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden.” John 19:41. We have here two gardens; the garden of man’s fall, and the garden of man’s recovery. Notice,—

1. The situation of these gardens as to *time*. Each stands at the beginning of a great epoch. The first words of the Old Testament are, “In the beginning God.” The first words of John’s gospel are, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God.”

2. Their situation as to *place*. The one is in Asia, the birth-place of the race; the other is in Jerusalem, the birth-place of the church—the new dispensation.

The Bible represents all mankind as derived from one pair of human beings. This is confirmed by Physiology, by Psychology, and by Philology.

The Bible represents the race as starting from Asia, and this is confirmed by tradition, and by the history of nations.

From Eden, God sent forth the representatives of the race, and commanded them “to be fruitful, and to multiply, and to replenish the earth.” From Jerusalem, Christ sent forth his disciples, the representatives of the spiritual race, and commanded to disciple all nations and preach the gospel in all the world.

3. Notice the *personages* in these two gardens. The gardens are not solitary; there are beings there.

There are two universes; one of mind, and one of matter. The one is filled with things, the other with powers. Nature is only the carpet on which powers walk, and work, and live. Science is only the process of unraveling the carpet to see how it is put together. Nature has no volition, no will, no conscience; and things are not accountable; powers are.

Why did God make us accountable and consequently capable of sinning? “Nay, but who art thou that repliest against thy maker? Shall the thing formed say, Why hast thou formed me thus?”

Why? — Because God preferred powers to things. One soul because it can will, and choose, and love, and hate, is worth more to God than the whole material universe. Kant said, “There are two things I stand in awe of — the immensity of the steller universe, and the responsibility of the human soul.” Jesus did not die for worlds; he died for men — for you! O why will you die?

WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

“*Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the Lord's side?*” *Ex. 32 : 26.*

I. WHO MAY BE SAID TO BE ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

1. Those who have come out of the world, and are separate.
2. Those who exert themselves with peculiar resolution for the support of his cause and kingdom.

II. WHY WE SHOULD ALL BE ON THE LORD'S SIDE.

1. Because it is the side of justice and truth.
2. Consider whose side you are on, if not on the Lord's side.
3. In how many instances God has appeared to you.
4. The cause of God shall be assuredly victorious.

III. APPLICATION.

1. How dreadful the condition of those who oppose the cause of God.
2. We have great reason to be humbled before God that we have no more zeal in his cause.
3. Let us all seriously consider what we can do for the support and advancement of this glorious cause.

S. LAVINGTON.

THE GOSPEL IN THE BOOK OF JOB.

(Read Psalm 32.)

"He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not: He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man." Job 33: 27-29.

I. WE HAVE HERE THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SINNER'S POSITION.

"If any say, I have sinned," etc. That just means, if any man will take his true position before God, then God will save him. What is sin? Well, we read in the book of Exodus and in the thirty-second Psalm about *transgression*, *iniquity*, and *sin*. Let us look at these three words and their meanings.

1. *Transgression* means "crossing over" — passing a boundary — the going upon forbidden ground. John tells us that "sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3: 4.

Illustration: The beautiful grounds, and the sign-board, "Trespassers prosecuted," etc.

2. *Iniquity* almost explains itself. It means something that is not equity, not equal, not straight.

Illustration: Trying to draw a straight line. It looks straight till it is placed beside the ruler. Isa. 28: 17.

3. *Sin* means coming short of a mark. God has given us a standard of conduct, and when we come short of that, that is sin. What is the standard? Hear: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy might, mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." Deut. 6: 5; Matt. 22: 37-39.

Illustration: When a boy, I have wearied myself trying to throw a stone over Niagara river. I could not even reach the water. I would select a smoother stone, and try to put more strength into my arm, but all in vain. So men weary themselves in trying to attain to righteousness without grace.

4. Sin does not profit. "And it profiteth me nothing." It brings no gain; nothing pays so poorly as wrong-doing. "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

5. Sin must be confessed in order to secure God's forgiveness. "And if any will say, I have sinned." "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1: 9.

II. WE HAVE HERE THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE.

1. "He looketh upon men." It is a look of transcendent compassion.

“He saw me ruined by the fall;
And loved me notwithstanding all.”

“He looketh upon men!” He looked upon Peter who had just denied him, and that look broke poor Peter’s heart and caused him to weep bitterly. “He looketh upon men!” Then he sees thy heart; he knows whether thou dost feel the bitterness of thy sins.

2. “He will deliver his soul from going down into the pit.” Ps. 40:2. This is God’s work; God does it. No man can deliver himself by his own efforts. Elihu knew the way of salvation; for in this very chapter he said, “Deliver me from going down into the pit, for I have found a RANSOM.”

3. “His life shall see light.” The unsaved man is in darkness. He is like one born in a coal-pit. When delivered, he is like the miner who has come up to the surface of the earth when the sun is shining. Christ is the light of the world. “In him is no darkness at all.”

“Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near.”

“Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with men.” This was written probably thirty-four or thirty-five hundred years ago. How few saints had lived then, compared with those who have lived since! O, could all the saints come back, they would all say, “Lo! oftentimes God worketh these things with men.”

ANONYMOUS.

BRICKS AND ALUMINUM.

AN OBJECT SERMON.

Psalm 139 : 14.

Material.—One hard and one soft brick; one very smooth finishing brick; one small earthen flower-pot, empty; one with a plant growing in it; a lump of aluminum; a thimble; card receiver; pin-cushion and tray made of the same metal.

Opening.—Reading of the 139th Psalm.

Base of Remarks.—Fourteenth verse of same Psalm.

Address.—Holding to view the soft brick I describe the making, from the sticky mud on our feet, to a burnt brick.

The analogy of God forming a Christian in like manner follows. The old nature is ground up like the clay. God takes the mud which we are and prepares it. As the soft brick is moulded, so he moulds us for a new purpose. The brick is burned in the kiln, so is the Christian burned in the furnace of temptations to make him fit for lasting service. Sand is mixed with the clay. The world needs *Christians* with sand in them—sand of boldness and endurance. Boldness to fight wrong-doing. Endurance to hold up the hands of the pastor, and not run away on Sunday evening to eat ice-cream soda.

Hold up the three bricks together—soft brick, hard brick, and finishing brick: some Christians are just like them; some are like the finishing brick, good for nothing but the outside.

The empty flower pot: It is made of clay and for a purpose. You see it is empty, just as some people—good vessels, but empty.

By description fill the pot with earth, and plant seeds, and have them sprout. Growth is shown by a quick change to the pot with blooming plant in it. How did it grow? — No one knows. What did we do to get it? — Watered it and gave it a place in the sunshine, and weeded it. God did the rest.

Draw forth the analogy between the foregoing pots and our bodies of clay as vessels like the pots; for God says our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost.

Christ plants the seeds of eternal life in our bodies as vessels, and we are to cultivate their growth, to place them in the sunshine of God's love, and to water them with our tears.

What happens if we don't water the flower in the pot, and keep it in the dark? — It will wither, you say. Yes! — And so it is with the eternal life-plant. Neglect it and it withers.

What is in the brick to make it hard and the flower-pot to make it firm? Hold up the lump of aluminum. In every clay bank, on the muddy, clayey feet, in the despised dirt is found this metal, whose strength is greater than brass. It never will tarnish, always remains bright and clean. Heat will not tarnish it like silver.

Explain the other articles of aluminum. Picking up a piece of this metal, I balance it on my thumb and strike it with another piece. It rings. So will the Christian ring clear and long when struck, if he be true metal. You can tell him every time.

To recapitulate for an evangelistic view: I observe, first, that to get this metal you must first get clay. Certainly we get dirty fingers, and soiled clothes, and muddy feet, but we must have the clay from which to extract the metal. This story closes the talk.

A magnificent dwelling had been built by a rich man. The builder, and architect, and owner were inspecting the work. Everything was finished. The grounds were cleaned, and there it stood — a model of beauty, completed, finished, done. Viewing the pile from all sides, they came at last to the front, and were standing in the street. As the builder moved, his foot struck something in the mud. He stooped and picked it up. 'T was nothing but a brick. It had not been placed in the structure because it had been lost in the mud.

Will it be so at the judgment? O Christians of all creeds, let us go down into the mud, caring naught for appearances, and only mindful of those lost souls that are there, and from whom Christ can get the precious metal and make it ring.

H. O. WILLS.

THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER.

(Read 1 Tim. 1 : 18 ; 6 : 12.)

"A good soldier of Jesus Christ." 2 Tim. 2 : 3.

To be a Roman soldier meant something. He carried probably a hundred pounds weight of weapons and accouterments, and fought a hand-to-hand contest.

We should be "good soldiers" because we have a good Captain. "For it became him, in bringing many sons into glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. 2 : 10. Not morally perfect, but that his work might be a finished one. The names of some generals bespeak defeat, while those of others inspire to certain victory. With the Captain of our salvation we must go on, conquering, and to conquer.

Some characteristics of a good soldier:—

1. He is properly equipped. “For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but spiritual.” 2 Cor. 10:4. Peter cutting off the ear of the high priest’s servant, thought differently, but Christ reproved him for his rashness. The spiritual armory with its offensive and defensive weapons is worth more than a passing survey. (See Eph. 6:11–18.) All parts point to Christ.

2. He does not go on his own charges. “Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?” His food, drink, uniform, banner, wages, and transportation are all furnished. Christ is the bread and water of life. The uniform is the open confession; the banner, that flag which has upon its ample folds those stripes which represent the stripes by which we are healed, and that star which suggests to us the star of Bethlehem. The wages are the joy of service (see John 4:36), and the transportation is that furnished by his everlasting arms underneath us, sustaining in life and in death, giving us an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.

3. He obeys orders. “Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” is the example set before us by Christ. Phil. 2:8. He would bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Cor. 10:5. As was the case with the six hundred at Balaklava, so ours should be “not to reason why.”

4. He endures hardness or hardship. 2 Tim. 2:3. No wonder Napoleon’s soldiers adored him, when as they lay on the ground, exposed to the pelting rain, they could see their “little corporal,” as they affectionately termed him, lying by their side. We too often consult our own convenience, rather than heed the calls of duty wherever they may lead. Said an Inca to his nobleman stretched by his side

on the rack, as he heard his groans of agony, "Do you think I lie on roses?" Christ did not lie on roses; and if we are to reign with him, we must also suffer with him. 2 Tim. 2 : 12.

5. Does not entangle himself with the affairs of this life. 2 Tim. 2 : 4. The cares of this world, its pleasures and riches. Luke 8 : 14. A soldier, a watchmaker by trade, when ordered to march, said he had some watches to mend as a reason for still remaining in camp. Let us avoid every form of evil, distraction, or care which would hinder us in the divine life.

6. He endures to the end. Mark 13 : 13. The deserter's punishment is a terrible one. Heb. 6 : 4-6; Luke 9 : 62; Luke 11 : 26. May we never "skulk," but ever be found in the thickest of the fight.

7. He gains the victory.

a. Over his own spirit. Prov. 16 : 32.

b. Over the world. 1 John 5 : 4, 5; 2 Chron. 20 : 15.

c. Over the enemy; "*takes*" captives of souls. Prov. 11 : 30; Dan. 12 : 3.

d. Over death, that last enemy. 1 Cor. 15 : 26, 57; 2 Tim. 4 : 7, 8.

e. He inherits all things. Rev. 21 : 7. Pizzaro, the conquerer of Peru, shared the fruits of victory with his followers; so eye hath not seen nor ear heard, etc. 1 Cor. 2 : 9. And again, all things are yours. 1 Cor. 3 : 22, 23.

f. Shall sit down with him on his throne. Rev. 3 : 21. The first Napoleon seated the members of his family on thrones, but they were soon deposed. James and John wished to sit on thrones. Mark 10 : 37, 38.

g. He shall receive a crown. Rev. 2 : 10. A triple crown of life, of righteousness, of glory; not the laurel wreath of this world's applause, but an incorruptible one that fadeth not away. At Grant's funeral we saw the oaken

wreath upon the casket, placed there by his grandchildren, and we thought,—

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

Are we all loyal? If not, then, as was the case with Sisera, the enemy of Israel and Israel's God, even the stars in their courses will fight against us.

I. H. B. HEADLEY.

FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

“*But Jesus said unto them they need not depart.*” *Matt. 14:16.*

THEY need not depart.—

1. *Because of Their Need.*—They were faint with hunger, but He was there who could command the stones to become bread.

The hunger of the body is but a type of soul hunger. “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Man has three natures; a physical, an intellectual, and a moral one. These can all be starved. They can be fed; but each must have its appropriate food. You cannot feed the moral nature on mathematics.

Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.” It was through eating that Eve died. It is through eating that we live. Jesus is manna for the hungry. “He that eateth of this bread shall live forever.” John 6:58.

A poor soldier lay dying in a Swiss hospital. His father coming to him, found him with the stupor of death

gathering over his senses. "You must not die," said the old man. "I have brought money. You shall have medicines, delicacies, everything; and when you are strong enough, I will take you home."

The sufferer shook his head. The father's heart sank, and he turned away to hide his tears. Presently he opened his traveling sack and took out a loaf of bread. Breaking off a piece, he gently placed a crumb in his son's mouth. After a moment the sick man swallowed it, and soon he opened his eyes, and whispered, "More!" "Your mother made that," said the father. "I know it," he replied, "it is so good." The father laid the little loaf on the bed, and the poor soldier took it up in his hands and began to eat, with tears rolling down his cheeks. From that hour he steadily grew better.

O poor, wounded, half-starved backslider, dying of hunger, let me offer you a crumb from the loaf of comfort. "I will heal your backslidings, I will love you freely." Eat it, and like the dying soldier, you will cry, "More."

2. *Because of Their Number.*—There were several thousand, and the disciples were troubled as to how so many were to be fed. "But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart."

The only thing the disciples could think of as an escape from the difficulty was to "send them away." And is not this the way we too often meet the emergencies of life?—simply trying to get rid of them? This is the way the church has treated the world's famishing multitudes.

There were two things that appalled the disciples; *the vastness of the multitude*, and *the smallness of their apparent resources*. So with us; we are often discouraged by the number of the heathen and the small amount in our mission

treasury. Did not Christ mean by this miracle to teach us *to have faith in God?*

3. *Because of the Character of the Place.*—It was “a desert place.” There were no flowing fountains; no rippling rills; no olive groves; no palm trees loaded with dates; no bread-fruit trees with loaves of bread. “But Jesus said unto them, “They need not depart.”

How many God has found as he found Israel, “In a waste, howling wilderness.” Christ can bless and save you in any place. He found Zaccheus in Jericho; he found Matthew at the receipt of custom, taking taxes; he found Bartimeus by the wayside begging; he found a sick man by the pool of water; he found the Samaritan woman by a well; he found the eunuch on a journey; he found Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus; he found Luther in a monk’s cell; he found John Bunyan mending pots and pans; he found John Newton on a slave ship. O, I am sure Jesus can save you in any place.

An Irishman was addressing a meeting on the “land question.” It was objected that much of the uncultivated land in Ireland was worthless. His answer was, Give a man possession of a wilderness and he will soon make it a fruitful field.” O, give Christ *possession of your heart*, and he will convert the rock into a garden.

4. *Because of the Time of Day.*—It was evening. God was gently drawing the curtain of darkness over those awful solitudes, and the disciples were alarmed. “But Jesus said, They need not depart.” Space and time are nothing to him. He can save at all times as well as in all places. The morning of life is the best time, but the evening time is not too late. O aged sinner, Jesus can save even you. He can save you now.

C. P.

HEART SEARCHING.

"I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." Rev. 2: 23.

THESE are the words of Jesus Christ sent back in a message from heaven. As such they are specially important. This life is a great test of nature and character. Every life is being observed, valued, and recorded. The same Saviour who said, "Come unto me," said also, "I am he which searcheth."

I. WHY THE LORD SEARCHES.

1. For true hearts. He tests the ground by the seed, sheep or goats, by the voice.
2. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." He takes nothing for granted. He tests the faith even of an Abraham, etc.

II. WHAT GOD SEARCHES.

1. Our claims as to morality. "As good as others;" "Doing the best I can;" "As good as church members;" etc.
2. Vows and promises: at sick bed; at church, etc.
3. Religious Professions.
4. Secret Purposes: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."
5. Secret nature and character.

III. HOW GOD SEARCHES.

1. By giving full liberty: free agency, full manhood, away from home, in secret moments.

2. Under various circumstances: poverty, prosperity, affliction.
3. By various agencies: temptation, opportunities to do good. The gospel offers. Delusions and isms.

IV. RESULT.

1. Verdict: "Weighed in the balances and found wanting." Not what we claim, not what we think, or our secret purposes not to love and serve God but self. The character earthy, sensual; no real desire to be saved; no special regard for God's cause; self the God of the heart.
2. Sentence: Guilty and worthy of eternal death. Not a plea left; not a reason for an hour's delay. This night God can justly end your life. The recording angel awaits the word to write "finished" opposite your record. The avenging angel waits the command, "Cut it down." Disease is in your system. It can bloom out in an hour into agony. God can touch your heart and instantly it stops and you die, as you sit there. Accident can overtake you as you step out into the street. A misstep, a slip, and all is over.

You have had time enough to repent and be consecrated; have had calls enough by sermons, reading, providences, blessings, the inner voice of conscience, the voice of the Holy Spirit, urgings of friends, sickness, loss of friends, etc. In a hundred ways God has said, "Repent, repent."

Justice says, "It is enough" nothing stands between you and deserved fate. But another voice cries: "Lord, let him alone this year also." Spare him. Give him one more revival season, one more call. Let conscience speak again. Let Christians pray around him. Let him be urged to repent and come to God.

This call is before you. It is heard by the Holy Spirit through this service, this sermon, calling you. You can refuse and resist and quench the Holy Spirit. You can accept and yield and give up to God. Which shall it be?

ALEXANDER PATTERSON.

THE HAPPY AND THE UNHAPPY MAN.

Psalm 1: 1-6.

DOCTRINE.—Character determines destiny. Two characters are brought before us; the one is pronounced happy, and the other miserable. Three things are said to characterize the good man:—

I. HE SHUNS EVIL COMPANIONS.

1. Here is a classification of the wicked; ungodly, sinners, scornful; that is, without God—opposed to God—and having contempt for God. No class of persons are nearer to perdition than scoffers of religion.

2. Here is a graduated scale of depravity,—walking, standing, sitting.

II. HE DELIGHTS IN THE WORD OF GOD.

The word “law” here stands for the whole of divine revelation. Show me a holy, God-fearing man, and I will show you one who loves the Bible. And what a man loves he thinks about; and so we read, “In his law he meditates day and night.”

III. HE IS LIKE A TREE PLANTED.

1. He is like a tree in his growth. “Consider the lilies, *how* they grow.” (See Drummond’s “Natural Law in the Spiritual World.”)

2. "A tree planted"—that is, a tree cared for. Such a tree is fenced in to protect it from wild beasts; it is staked to preserve it from the wind; it is watered in the time of drouth.

The Latin Vulgate uses a double negative in translating here: "Not so the wicked, not so." He is not like a tree planted, but like the *heath* in the wilderness, or like the *bramble* whose end is to be burned, or like *chaff*, without *beauty*, without *value*, without *power*, for the wind driveth it away."

Three things are affirmed of the wicked :—

1. *He will be Condemned in the Judgment.*—"Shall not stand in the Judgment." This does not mean that he will not be present; "for we shall all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ;" but the word "stand" here is a *law term*, and means the same as to be "justified."

2. *His Companionship with the Righteous will Terminate.*—"Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Farewell, holy Sabbaths; farewell, house of God; farewell, praying father and mother!

3. *His End will be Destruction.*—"The way of the ungodly shall perish." How much that means we do not know, but it is a doom that Jesus wept over, and died to save from.

HOMILIST.

SOUL-SAVING THE CHRISTIAN'S BUSINESS.

"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 1 Cor. 9 : 22.

It is a grand thing to see a man thoroughly possessed with one master passion. Such a man was Paul, and such should we also be. The grace of God did no more for Paul than for us. Should there not be the same fruit from the same sowing ?

1. Paul's great object in his life and ministry was to save some. Some, I fear, preach with a view of amusing men. Paul did not lay himself out to please the public and collect a crowd.

Others are of opinion that the object of Christian effort should be to educate men. Education is an exceedingly valuable thing, but the business of the church is salvation. If Christian teachers have merely taught the individual to read, to repeat hymns, and so forth, they have not yet touched their true vocation.

Paul does not even say that he tried to moralize men. The best promoter of morality is the gospel. When a man is saved, he becomes moral—more, he becomes holy. When Paul desired to save some, he meant by that nothing less than that (1) some should be born again; that (2) some might be cleansed from their past iniquity through the merit of the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God; that (3) they might be purified and made holy. Nothing but your salvation can ever make me feel that my heart's desire is granted.

2. The apostle had great reasons for electing such a purpose in life. (1) If they be not saved, how is God dis-

honored ? (2) The extreme misery of the human race; (3) The terrible future of impenitent souls.

If they be saved, observe the contrast. Seek that some may be there in glory. Behold your Master! He left heaven, went to the cross, to the grave, to save some. You must, all of you, be always endeavoring to save some.

3. The great methods which the apostle used: (1) by simply preaching the gospel. Tell the sinner all the doctrines. Give the people every truth baptized in holy fire, and each truth will have its own effect upon the mind. But the great truth is the cross — the truth that “God so loved,” etc. (2) Paul used much prayer. No one can use the gospel hammer well, except he is much on his knees. Prevail with God and you will prevail with men. (3) Paul went to his work always with an intense sympathy for those he dealt with — a sympathy which made him always adapt himself to each case. If he talked to a Jew, he did not say that he was the apostle of the Gentiles; but talked as a Jew to him, and so with men of every nation, education, and taste. He was all things to all men, that he might save some. Everything should be made subservient to this one object — he must throw overboard all peculiarities, and yield a thousand indifferent points, in order to bring men to Jesus. Talk to children as children; visit the sick with sympathy. Learn the sacred art of soul-winning by adaptation. Every place of worship should be a “soul-trap.”

C. H. SPURGEON.

ANXIETY FOR SOULS.

"No man cared for my soul." Ps. 142: 4.

I. WHAT IT IS TO CARE FOR THE SOULS OF OTHERS.

1. This involves deep and heartfelt conviction of the worth of the soul.

2. Alarming apprehensions of the dangers to which they are exposed.

3. Intense anxiety and tender solicitude.

4. Active, zealous, liberal exertions to promote their salvation.

II. ON WHOM DOES THIS DUTY MORE IMMEDIATELY DEVOLVE?

1. It is especially incumbent on heads of families.

2. It is the duty of all members of Christian societies.

3. It is pre-eminently the vocation of all Christian ministers.

4. It is the duty of every man that breathes.

III. THE GREAT EVIL OF NEGLECTING SO MOMENTOUS A DUTY.

1. It is cruel.

2. It is ungrateful.

3. It is shamefully criminal.

4. It is exceedingly fatal.

Application: Repent that you have manifested so little care for souls. Mingle with regrets, emotions of gratitude that Christians do care for souls more now than formerly.

DR. R. NEWTON.

JERUSALEM'S OMISSIONS.

"She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God." Zeph. 3:2.

HERE are four things charged upon this people, for which a *woe* is pronounced upon them. They are all four sins of omission. This is the first, "She obeyed not the voice."

I. THERE is a VOICE, WHICH IF WE DO NOT OBEY, IT DOTH CERTAINLY EXPOSE US TO THE DIVINE WOES.

1. What voice is meant? — God's. He speaks by his Son, by his Spirit, by his word, by ministers, by conscience, by providence.

2. What is it to obey the voice of God? — To *do* according to it. This obedience must be single-eyed, in the name of Jesus Christ, with constancy and perseverance.

3. The evil of not obeying God's voice. Consider whose voice it is; at whose instigation we disobey; how often it has been done; for what poor advantages we have done it; how all other creatures obey his voice!

4. To what woes it exposes us. Gal. 3:10; Deut. 28; 1 Sam. 15.

5. *The Application:* Wherein are we concerned? — Upon the public account; upon our own account. Expect another voice shortly, — "Come, ye blessed," or, "Depart, ye cursed."

II. NOT TO RECEIVE CORRECTION IS A SIN WHICH EXPOSES PERSONS AND PEOPLE TO DIVINE WOES.

1. What it is not to receive correction; not to own the hand of God in our corrections; not to own the anger of God in our corrections; to be the procuring cause of our

corrections; not to justify God in them; not to own that there is mercy mixed; to murmur and repine and complain; not to bear the rod; not to be reformed by them; to be made worse instead of better by them.

2. What evil there is in this. It is an affront to the Divine Majesty. It is a sin against the remedy. It is a sign that there is no grace.

3. What woes usually follow this sin? — Sharper trials. He gives them up and corrects them no more. Isa. 1:5; Hosea 4:17.

4. *The Application:* Have we been corrected? Have we received correction? If we have not, what is to be done? Repent! Repent!

III. NOT TRUSTING IN GOD IS AN OMISSION WHICH EXPOSES PEOPLE TO DIVINE WOES.

1. What is it not to trust in the Lord? The Scriptures express trust in the Lord: By *resting* in him. Ps. 37:7. *Relying* upon the Lord. 2 Chron. 13:18; 2 Chron. 16:7, 8. *Casting our burden* upon the Lord. Ps. 55:22; 1 Peter 5:7. *Committing our way and works* to him. Ps. 37:5; Prov. 16:3. By *flying to him for refuge*. Ps. 11:1; Ps. 57:1; Heb. 6:18. *By taking hold of his arm*. Isa. 27:5.

2. The evil there is in not trusting in the Lord. It brings great guilt on the soul. It provokes God. It hinders our peace, bars our prayers, is at the bottom of all departure from God. It brings eternal ruin. John 3:36; Mark 16:16.

3. *The Application:* Have we trusted in the Lord? He has given us promise on promise. He is faithful and true. What repeated experience we have had that he has not failed us.

PHILIP HENRY (1693).

BROKEN CISTERNS.

“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” Jer. 2: 12.

1. *The Sinner's Sin is Desertion.*—“They have forsaken me.” This was man's first sin; this was the great sin of ancient Israel; this was the sin of the prodigal (“he took his journey into a far country”); this is man's great sin still—they try to get away from God.

This sin is *unnatural*. Verses 10, 11. Even the heathen do not change their gods. It is more brutal than the beasts of the field; for “the ox knoweth its owner, and the ass its master's crib, but my people do not know, Israel doth not consider.”

This sin cannot be *justified*. Peoples have sometimes forsaken their king, and justified themselves before the world by proclaiming his tyranny; children have forsaken a parent and justly so, because the parent was unnatural and cruel; but we can assign no reason for forsaking our God.

2. *The Sinner's Life is Laborious.*—He hews out cisterns. Men dream of ease and live in trial. The devil is a hard task-master. The prodigal went and “hired himself to a citizen of that country.” “The way of the transgressor is hard.” Yes, hard to get in; hard to keep in, and hard to get out of.

3. *The Sinner's Work is Worthless.*—“Cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. The prodigal “would fain have filled himself with the husks that the swine did eat, but no man gave unto him.” How worthless the work

of the man who built his house on the sand! When the storm came, "it fell." How worthless the work of that farmer who said to his soul, "Soul, take thine ease; thou hast much goods laid up in store." God said, "Fool, this night thy soul is required of thee." How worthless the work of those tower-builders on the plain of Shinar!

4. *The Sinner's State is Appalling.*—He is not only a slave to toil and to unsatisfaction; he is exposed to great danger. God bids the heavens and the earth to look on it and be astonished. Listen, and you can almost hear the billows of their lamentations.

5. *The Sinner's Condition is not Hopeless.*—God says, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner." "Return unto me, and I will return unto you."

"Return, O wandering soul, return,
And seek an injured father's face;
Those warm desires that in thee burn,
Were kindled by reclaiming grace."

ANONYMOUS.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

Read Luke 13 : 6-9.

I. THE FIG-TREE PLANTED.

1. An act of favor. Fig-trees were not as a rule reared in vineyards, but grew among the rocks, in hedges, etc.

2. The object for which it was planted — to bear fruit.

II. THE PROPRIETOR'S COMPLAINT.

1. Expectation.

2. Observation.

3. Patience.

4. Disappointment.

III. THE VINEDRESSER'S INTERCESSION.

1. How he pleads !

2. The *tenderness* of his plea.

3. He seems to take all the blame on his own shoulders — “Lord, let it alone, *till I shall dig about it and dung it.*”

4. His hopefulness — “and if it shall bear fruit, well.”

5. His acknowledgment of the justice of the proprietor's sentence — “and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”

This parable was meant specially for the *Jews*. It may also be applied to the *Church* — to *professing but not fruit-bearing Christians* — and to *the unconverted*.

We may then glance at two more thoughts.

IV. THE PROPRIETOR'S FORBEARANCE.

We may see it exemplified in all the applications just made — *Jews*, church, etc.

V. THE FINAL DESTRUCTION OF ALL FRUITLESS TREES.

Verse 9.

A. F. BARFIELD.

THE GREAT QUESTION, AND THE INSPIRED ANSWER.

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart.” Acts 2 : 37-39.

INTRODUCTION.

The circumstances of the gathering. Under these strange circumstances the people asked an important question.

I. THE QUESTION — “MEN AND BRETHREN, WHAT SHALL WE DO ?”

1. *To this question they were led* (1) by the truth; (2) by the Spirit; (3) by their conscience — a view of one sin leading to a consciousness of many.

2. *This question indicates* their (1) feeling, (2) condition, (3) and desire.

3. *This question was* (1) honest, (2) searching, (3) personal.

II. TO THIS QUESTION WE HAVE A SUITABLE AND SIGNIFICANT ANSWER. Verses 38, 39.

1. *Consider who gives the answer.* (1) Apostles, (2) inspired, (3) speaking with authority.

2. *The answer urges* to (1) repentance, (2) profession of Christ, (3) yielding to the Spirit's control.

3. *The answer rests* (1) not on human wisdom, (2) not on human goodness, (3) not on human efforts, (4) but on the promise of God (verse 39)—which promise is as wide as the world.

III. TO A RIGHT RECEPTION COMES A BLESSED CONSUMMATION.

1. *In personal experience.* (1) Peace, (2) gladness, (3) singleness of heart. Verse 46.

2. *Relatively.* (1) Favor with God (2) and man. Verse 47.

APPLICATION: Who of you will ask the same question, with the same motives and feelings, and will respond to the answer which God sends to your soul with the same alacrity and faithfulness?

J. M. ALLIS.

THE ABSENTEE, OR A BLESSING LOST.

"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." John 20 : 24.

I. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF IN A SPECIAL MANNER.

II. AT SUCH TIMES A WONDROUS BLESSING IS ALWAYS REALIZED.

III. THOSE WHO ARE NOT PRESENT DURING THESE SEASONS ARE THE SUBJECTS OF INCALCULABLE LOSS.

A word or two by way of a still more practical application.

1. *In public worship we may always expect to see Jesus*—whether it be in the Sabbath or week-day services. Yet how many who are professedly disciples, like Thomas, absent themselves from these means of grace. You will observe it was *a disciple* who was away, not an uninterested

person; so they are often *church members* who stay away from the ordinances of God's house.

2. *God notes such absence.* Thomas, doubtless, never thought that all the world would one day know he was not present when the Master came; and many readers of the Bible now pass over this verse very lightly, as though it were something just thrown in to complete the narrative. But amongst other great truths it teaches this — that God notices the absence of *individuals* from his worship.

3. *What was it that caused the absence of Thomas?* We do not know; we can only guess. But we do know what keeps thousands of our church members from the sanctuary: (1) Indifference; (2) laziness; (3) pleasure; (4) business.

4. *In all such cases these absentees lose far more than they gain.*

a. They may gain bodily rest, but they lose rest of soul.

b. They may gain worldly riches, but they lose spiritual peace of mind.

c. They may gain the world, but they may lose their soul.

A. F. BARFIELD.

AN ADDRESS TO MORAL MEN.

Ephesians 2 : 8, 9.

THREE QUESTIONS.

I. WHAT DO I MOST WANT?

1. Not money, etc. (Illustrate), but LIFE. Job 2 : 4.
2. Not only life, but never-ending life — everlasting life — eternal life. (Illustrate.)

II. IS IT OBTAINABLE?

1. The doctor, philosopher, millionaire, electrician, etc., etc., are all alike unable to give it to me. John 6 : 68. (Illustrate.)
2. God, only, promises — no alternative. John 3 : 14, 15, 16, 36, etc.

III. HOW CAN I OBTAIN IT?

All things come to men in one of *three* ways. *Eternal life* is gained either —

1. *Honestly.*

- a. Man can never work his way to heaven by doing good deeds. Eph. 2 : 9; Titus 3 : 5; Gal. 2 : 16. (Illustrate.)

b. Our righteousness. Isa. 64 : 6.

c. Moral reform a failure. (Illustrate.)

2. *Dishonestly.*

- a. No short cut to salvation.
- b. Hypocrites to be lost.

3. *A Gift.**a.* Eph. 2 : 8, 9. (Illustrate.)*b.* Eternal life the gift of God. Rom. 6 : 23.*c.* Plea for acceptance.F. T. PIERSON.

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN.

"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Acts 11 : 26.

ANTIOCH, famed for its wealth and magnificence, for its luxury and licentiousness, a city of Syria on the Orontes, gave to the world the name Christian, destined to outlive the language into which it was borne, and to occupy a conspicuous place in the dictionaries of all nations. The text suggests the inquiry,—

What is a Christian ? Not one who lives in a Christian nation. Residence in China would not make you a Confucian. Not one who practices morality. The Brahmin and Buddhist do this. Our text defines a Christian as a disciple of Christ—one who sits at the feet of Jesus, and learns of him. To the early Christians, Christ was all in all. They obeyed Christ, preached Christ, worshiped Christ, lived Christ. Modern necessities have not abrogated these ancient conditions. Let us inquire further—

1. What is a Christian ? By profession he is one who receives the Christ as revealed in the word of God; who commits his soul to the keeping of Christ; rests his eternal hope upon the atonement of Christ; believes and confesses publicly his faith in him as the divine Son of God. A Christian is one who repents of sin, proving its genuineness by reformation—index of the possession of his divine life.

2. What is a Christian? *As to relationship*, he is free from the curse of the law. As to the world, the flesh, and the devil, free from their servitude. As to God, he is a Son — an heir. As to the world to come, he is a citizen of heaven, with a horizon bounded only by eternity.

3. What is a Christian? *As to character*, he is clothed with the spotless robes of Christ's righteousness. His aspirations are to place his feet in the footprints of his Master, and thus gain and breathe the holiness of heaven.

4. What is a Christian? *As to occupation*, he continues the beneficent work of Christ. He goes where the suffering are; visits the afflicted widow and orphan; relieves the distressed; comforts the sorrowing; inspires the despairing, saves the lost.

Are you a Christian? a Christian on Monday, as well as on Sunday? If so, prove worthy of your high calling; for "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." If you are not a Christian, ask and ye shall receive his grace; seek, and ye shall find his pardon; knock, and his kingdom shall be opened unto you.

FRANCIS EDWARD SMILEY.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

Hebrews 12 : 2.

CONSIDERING these words in their connection with the preceding verse, let us be found looking unto Jesus —

I. AS AN EXAMPLE.

1. Christ had like passions to ourselves, and was exposed to the same kind of trials as we are; but his life is a

series of victories, the spiritual subduing the natural, and keeping the passions in perfect control. See him —

- a. When tempted of the devil.
- b. In his contact with men.
- c. When betrayed by a professed friend.
- d. When tried before Pilate.

Many more instances might be given, but the one thought is, in all life's trials and temptations, let us be found "looking unto Jesus." When placed in positions of difficulty and perplexity, let us consider "how would Christ have acted," and then let us go and do likewise.

- e. When crucified on Calvary.

2. So must we keep under the body and bring it into subjection — following Christ's example, we shall, like him, overcome.

II. AS A GUIDE.

1. There is not a step in the race-course but Jesus has taken it. He knows the whole way, and therefore,

- a. He is able to *direct* in times of perplexity.
- b. Able to *succor* in distress.
- c. Able to *save* in danger.
- d. And we know that he is *willing*.

III. FOR ENCOURAGEMENT.

1. His difficulties were far greater than ours can ever be, yet he endured all, and is now sitting at the right hand of the throne of God.

2. He, therefore, knows how to sympathize with the tempted and the tried, for he is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

3. He will say at last to all who have followed his example, "Well done; enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne."

A. F. BARFIELD.

SPEAK TO YOUNG MEN.

“Run, speak to this young man.” Zech. 2: 4.

1. *Why Should the Young Man be an Object of Special Solicitude?* — On account of his inexperience. Because he is surrounded by formidable temptations. He may have evil advisers. His soul's interest may depend upon seasonable counsel. He is an important member of the community. He is rapidly passing from a state favorable to healthy influences.

2. *Who Should Speak to the Young Man?* — His parents, Christian employers, ministers, young Christians.

3. *How Should we Speak to Him?* — Speedily, seasonably, repeatedly, appropriately, tenderly, seriously.

4. *What Shall we Say to Him?* — Tell him he is a sinful being; that he has a soul to be saved; that he has a God to serve; that there is a Saviour able to save to the uttermost; that sin, though seeming pleasant, is deadly in its consequences; that he has capacities worthy of better pursuits than sensual gratification; that there is a judgment to come.

PREACHER'S PORTFOLIO.

ABUNDANT PARDON.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isa. 55:7.

It is a melancholy fact that all have transgressed God's law and incurred its dreadful penalty. Rom. 3:12-16.

1. *Notice the Classes Addressed.*—The “*wicked*” and the “*unrighteous*.” In a certain sense the whole unsaved world may be so divided. The wicked man *living* in his wicked way, and the unrighteous man *thinking* his unrighteous thoughts. These two classes are to be found everywhere, both in the broad way with their backs against God, *equally lost* because equally guilty of transgressing God's law.

While there are *degrees* of sin in the lives of men, there is no degree as to the fact of *guilt*, because all have broken God's law. To break *one part* puts man under the curse. Rom. 3:22, 23; Gal. 3:10; and James 2:10. The unrighteous man is the harder of the two to reach, because he thinks he is “*not very bad*.” The wicked man in his wicked way is only the unrighteous man *blossomed out*, or worse, *gone to seed*.

Every drunkard was first a moderate drinker, and so every wicked man was first an unrighteous thinking man.

2. *The mercy of God.*—The mercy of God is revealed in a pardon for the sinner.

Man's sin is like a debt that he cannot pay. As no man can forgive a debt, but the creditor to whom the debt is due, so only God can forgive us our debts, whose debtors we are to an uncalculable amount. How great is the

difference between the pardon of heaven and the pardon of earth! When an earthly ruler pardons, the transgressor goes free and is restored to citizenship, but he is ever reminded of guilt. When God pardons, he treats the sinner as if he had never sinned. (See Acts 13 : 38, 39.) The word "justified" in this verse means "acquitted," and when one is acquitted, he is treated as if *innocent*.

3. *God's Condition*.—Two words are used in our text, "forsake" and "turn," or "return," and in these two words the conditions are summed up. Forsaking sinful ways, and unrighteous thoughts, and turning to God with repentance and confession. God is willing and waits. How long he will wait we cannot tell. When Alexander encamped before a city to which he was to lay siege, he used to hang out a light which was to assure the people that any who would come to him would receive mercy at his hand. So long as the light could be seen, there was mercy shown, but as soon as it was removed, they could only expect cruelty and death. God's light of mercy still shines, and the door is still open,—to-morrow it may be closed forever.

HAROLD F. SAYLES.

A WEALTHY BUT SAD FAMILY.

"There was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day." Luke 16: 19.

THE leading features of the family here portrayed are:—

1. *It was a Wealthy Family*.—"Wore purple and fine linen every day." They were probably the great magnates of the neighborhood.

2. *It was a Large Family.*—There were six brothers. No sisters are mentioned, and probably the parents were gone.

3. *It was a Family which Death had Visited.*—“The rich man died and was buried.” Death will neither be bribed by wealth, nor wait for preparation.

4. *It was a Family, One of whom was in Hell.*—In hell (or hades) he lifted up his eyes, being in torments. Here is a man with the greatest wealth sinking into the depth of moral perdition. Secular wealth is sometimes soul-degrading.

5. *It was a Family whose Surviving Brothers were All on the Road to Ruin.*—The five who were left behind were marching in their brother’s footsteps.

6. *It was a Family whose Deceased Brother Recoiled at the Idea of Reunion.*—Sin is de-sociating, de-humanizing.

7. *It was a Family who Possessed All the Means they Needed or Would Ever Have For Spiritual Salvation.*—“If they hear not Moses,” etc.—*Homiletic Monthly.*

THE PRODIGAL SON.

Luke 15: 11-24.

SEVEN words, each commencing with *W*, give a comprehensive idea of the career of this well-known youth.

1. *Willful.*—Home became irksome because of its beneficial, wholesome restraints.

2. *Wandering.*—The road from his father’s door, over which he traveled, led him farther and farther from peace and happiness.

3. *Wasteful*.—Time, physical power, mental talents, money, influence, etc., were all wasted in his prodigal course.

4. *Wanting*.—His search for pleasure ended in hunger and destitution. Husks, the food of swine, were desired by him in vain.

5. *Wretched*.—Misery, the sure result of sin, took possession of his whole being, and brought him to reflect on his present and past condition.

6. *Walking Home Again*.—Sinful steps must be retraced. No happiness away from God — no home but with him.

7. *Welcome*.—This always awaits the penitent sinner. The best robe which adorns the child on birthdays and festivals encircles him. The ring of a prince is put on his finger, and the shoes of a freeman on his feet.

To the impenitent sinner the end must be woe: "Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him," etc.

Watch against temptation; wait on the Lord; walk with Christ.

JOSEPH SANDERSON.

BELONGING TO CHRIST.

"*And ye are Christ's.*" 1 Cor. 3: 23.

1. *Here is Ownership, with the Idea of Responsibility*.—We as believers are Christ's—(1) By creation; (2) by providence; (3) by donation; (4) by redemption, (5) by conquest; (6) by surrender.

2. *Here is Relationship with the Idea of Privilege*.—This relationship is expressed in various ways in the Scriptures—

- a.* We are his sheep. John 10: 1-15.
- b.* We are his servants. Acts 4: 29.
- c.* We are his friends. John 15: 13-15.
- d.* We are his brothers. Matt. 12: 48; Mark 3: 35.
- e.* We are his bride. John 3: 29; Rev. 21: 2.
- f.* We are his body. Rom. 12: 4, 5; Eph. 4: 15, 16.
- g.* We are one in spirit with Christ. 1 Cor. 6: 17.
- h.* "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." 1 John 3: 2.

J. J. IRVING.

THINGS WORTH KNOWING.

1 Thessalonians 1: 1-5

1. *The Worthlessness of the Flesh or the Badness of Everything Belonging to the Nature with which we are Born into the World.*—"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." Rom. 7: 18; 8: 7, 8; Gal. 5: 19-21; Phil. 3: 3; Eph. 2: 1-3; John 3: 5, 6; Gen. 6: 5; Job 14: 4; Ps. 51: 5; Isa. 64: 6; Jer. 17: 9.

2. *The Love of God for Us.*—"We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." 1 John 4: 16; John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 8; 2 Thess. 2: 16; Eph. 2: 4-6; Titus 3: 4, 5; 1 John 4: 8-10; Deut. 7: 7, 8; 1 Kings 10: 9; Isa. 63: 9; Jer. 31: 3.

3. *The Grace of Jesus Christ our Lord.*—"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8: 9; Acts 15: 11; Rom. 3: 24,

26; 5 : 20, 21; 11 : 6; Gal. 1 : 6; Eph. 2 : 8; 2 Cor. 12 : 9; Rev. 22 : 21.

4. *The Holy Spirit*.—“The Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you; and shall be in you.” John 14 : 17; 15 : 26; 16 : 7-13; Acts 1 : 8; 5 : 31, 32; 9 : 31; 10 : 44; Rom. 8 : 2, 9, 11, 14, 16, 26; 1 Cor. 2 : 9-14; 2 Cor. 1 : 22; Gal. 4 : 6, 7.

5. *That we have Eternal Life*.—“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.” 1 John 5 : 13; John 3 : 15, 36; 5 : 24; 6 : 40, 47; 10 : 28; 17 : 2, 3; Rom. 6 : 23; Gal. 6 : 8; Titus 1 : 1, 2; 3 : 7; 1 John 1 : 1, 2; 2 : 25; 5 : 11.

6. *That All Things Work Together for Our Good*.—“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Rom. 8 : 28; Gen. 1 : 20; Deut. 8 : 3, 16; Ps. 46 : 1-3; Prov. 18 : 10; 2 Cor. 4 : 15-17; Phil. 1 : 19; Heb. 12 : 6-11; James 1 : 2-4; Rom. 8 : 33-39.

7. *That a Happy Resurrection Awaits us at the Coming of the Lord*.—“I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” John 11 : 24; Isa. 25 : 8; 26 : 19; Dan. 12 : 2; Hosea 13 : 14; Matt. 22 : 29, 32; Luke 14 : 14; John 5 : 28, 29; Acts 17 : 31, 32; 24 : 15; 1 Cor. 15 : 20, 23, 42, 43; 1 Thess. 4 : 13-18.

J. H. BROOKES.

REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

“ Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows.”
Isa. 60: 8.

1. At some future time a vast multitude of mankind will be gathered unto the church of Christ.

2. This multitude will, in a great measure, consist of such persons as were not rationally expected to become Christians.

3. These persons will enter the church of their own accord, and with great earnestness of mind.

4. They possess a dove-like character.

REMARKS.

1. From these observations it is evident that there will hereafter be a general revival of religion in the world.

2. This revival will furnish a solid foundation of joy to the universe.

3. The same things are partially true of every revival of religion.

4. We are bound faithfully to labor, and fervently to pray for the increased revival of religion.

DR. DWIGHT.

THE MARVELOUS MAGNET.

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying by what death he should die." John 12 : 32, 33.

I. THE ATTRACTIVE FORCE WHICH LIES IN A CRUCIFIED SAVIOUR.

1. *To himself*; not to your church or mine.
2. He *draws all* men; some refuse to yield.
3. The force by which he draws men is *love*.
4. He draws them by the promise of *rest*.

5. He draws us *by the change* which he works in other men before our eyes.

II. HOW IS THIS FORCE EXERCISED ?

1. Through the *Holy Spirit*; but he uses *instruments*.
2. He draws men *gradually*. Some are brought to Christ by slow degrees.
3. He draws men *gently*. As if a zephyr wafted us to Jesus.
4. He draws men *effectually*. He who yields to his power is drawn to righteousness.

III. WHAT DOES ALL THIS IMPLY ?

1. That man, by nature, is *a long way off* from Christ.
2. Men will not come to Christ unless *he draws* them.
3. Are *you* coming ? Come, and welcome.

C. H. SPURGEON.

THE FOOL'S DEATH.

"Died Abner as a fool dieth." 2 Sam. 3: 33.

I. ABNER DIED AS A FOOL DIETH, BECAUSE—

1. He put himself so unwittingly in the hands of his natural enemy.

2. He did not make use of the powers God had given him. "Thy hands were not bound." Verse 34.

3. He perished on the very threshold of salvation. Hebron was a city of refuge.

II. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WE HAVE THREE STRIKING EXAMPLES OF THE DEATH OF FOOLS.

1. The rich fool who made no provision for the future. Luke 12: 20.

2. The covetous fool who tried to serve two masters—God and mammon,—to live for the church and the world. Acts 5: 1–6.

3. The egotistical fool, who gave not God the glory. Acts 12: 21–23.

RESTORING BACKSLIDERS.

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5: 19, 20.

1. The text does not apply to the unconverted.
2. Nor to the hypocrite — the mere professor.
3. Neither to those who are intellectually wrong.
4. But to one who has been truly converted to Jesus, and yet has gone back into the world again — to one who has *"fallen from grace."*

Let us learn then —

1. *That it is Possible to Backslide.*

Some of the causes —

- a. A false estimate of the requirements of discipleship.
- b. A false estimate of one's own strength.
- c. Intellectual pride.
- d. Neglect of the means of grace.

2. *That the Text Recognizes the Christian Duty of Mutual Oversight.*

3. *That the Restoration of the Backslider is One of the Grandest and Noblest of all Christian Works.*

J. BARFIELD.

THE LORD'S TENDER CARE OF YOUNG CONVERTS.

"He shall gather the lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom." Isa. 40 : 11. Compare verses 12-15.

YOUNG converts he lifts to a place of safety in his arms, and carries them near his heart. They are more precious to him than all the rest of his works. (1) They are near his heart while seas, lakes, and rivers he keeps at arm's length. "Measuring the waters in the hollow of his hands." (2) They are next to his heart while the dome of heaven is at his fingers' ends, "meting it out with the span." (3) While all the earth beneath us he comprehends in a measure. (4) While the hills and mountains he weighs in scales. (5) While he takes up the islands as a very little thing. (6) While all nations are in comparison as the drop in the bucket or the small dust of the balance.

SAMUEL ALMAN.

STUNTED AND DWARFED SOULS.

Jeremiah 17 : 6.

I. THOSE AGAINST WHOM THIS CURSE IS DENOUNCED.

1. Those people of the world who are prayerless and practically atheistic.

2. Such professors as trust only in means and instruments.

3. All those who cherish false hopes of heaven.

II. HOW THESE RESEMBLE THE "HEATH IN THE DESERT."

1. In their unfruitfulness.
2. In their dismal solitariness.
3. In their ignorance and unthankfulness as to works of grace.
4. In the growth of none but heathlike virtues when showers come.
5. In their danger of being abandoned to hopeless desolation.

E. D. GRIFFIN.

INDICATIONS OF A TRUE REVIVAL.

"So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone." *Eze. 37: 7.*

IN this and the succeeding verses we may trace the indications of a true revival. We have here —

1. THE DECLARATION OF THE TRUTH.—*"So I prophesied as I was commanded."*
2. THE EFFECT PRODUCED.—*"There was a noise."*
3. THE EFFECT BECOMES VISIBLE.—*"And behold a shaking."*
4. THE VISIBLE EFFECT TAKES A PARTICULAR FORM.—*"And the bones came together."*

5. THE HOLY GHOST IS MANIFESTED AND LIFE IS GIVEN.
Verses 9, 10.

A. F. BARFIELD.

FAREWELL PERSUASIVES TO YOUNG CONVERTS.

Philippians 1: 27, 28.

TAKE the words in their order :—

1. “Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ.” Keep a gospel walk with God.
2. “Stand fast in one spirit, in one mind,”—unity and love.
3. “Strive together,” etc,—zeal.
4. “And in nothing terrified by our adversaries,”—a caution not to be afraid of your enemies.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

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